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ISLAMIC RESEARCH ASSOCIATION
SERIES, No. 10

THE RISE OF THE FATIMIDS

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ISMAILI TRADITION

concerning the

RISE OF THE FATIMIDS

by

W. IVANOW

(*Coran*).

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PREFACE

The present work is an attempt,—apparently the first of its kind,—to collect, analyse, and systematise as far as possible all the information contained in the genuine Ismaili literature concerning the history of the grand Shi'ite movement which brought about the foundation of the Fatimid caliphate in N. Africa in 297/909. This work is not intended either to establish or refute the truth of such tradition, or of the claims of the Fatimids, or anything similar. The information collected here has remained for many centuries a jealously guarded secret, and only the changing spirit of modern times has made it possible to obtain access to it. Although every possible effort has been made to render this collection as exhaustive as possible, it is beyond doubt that a certain number of references, some of them perhaps of interest, have remained unused, partly because the works in which they are found were not accessible, and partly because they are included (as it often happens in religious works) in the most unexpected contexts, where no one would reasonably search for them. It seems, however, almost certain that these would not alter the general picture in any essential way.

If this work should prove useful to students, this is entirely due to the most precious, admirable and unfailing co-operation and support of my Ismaili friends. Without their help nothing could ever have been achieved on these lines. It is a sorrow to me that I am not able to acknowledge here publicly my feelings of profound gratitude and indebtedness to each of them separately. Old prejudices are still by no means dead, and many of those who have proved their sincere sympathy with the cause, and have done very much to assist in these researches, would not wish to be associated with them in public.

I am immensely indebted to Mr. Ali Mahomed Mecklai, the President of the Islamic Research Association, with his Executive

Committee, for the publication of this work in their series; and to Mr. A. A. A. Fyzee, for his helpfulness in placing at my disposal his most valuable collection of Manuscripts. My profound gratitude is also due to Mr. J. A. B. Palmer for having kindly taken upon himself the dreary task of going through the English of this work.

W. Ivanow.

Bombay, July 1941.

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TABLE OF TRANSLITERATION:

ا آ — *a, i, u, ā*; ب — *b*; ت — *t*; ث — *th*; ج — *j*; ح — *ḥ*; خ — *kh*; د — *d*; ذ — *dh*; ر — *r*; ز — *z*; س — *s*; ش — *sh*; ص — *ṣ*; ض — *ḍ*; ط — *ṭ*; ظ — *ẓ*; ع — ʻ; غ — *gh*; ف — *f*; ق — *q*; ک — *k*; ل — *l*; م — *m*; ن — *n*; ه — *h*; و — *w, ū*, (*ā*); ی — *y, ī, ā*. Short vowels: *a, i, u*; elision of the *alif* in the definite article: ʼ; *hamza*: ʼ.

ABBREVIATIONS

Biḥār = *K. Biḥāru'l-anwār*, by Mḥd Bāqir b. Mḥd Taqī Majlisī, vol. xiii (*lith.* Iṣfahān, 1304/1887).

BSOS = Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies.

E.I. = Encyclopaedia of Islam, English edition.

Exposé = S. de Sacy, Exposé de la Religion des Druzes, Paris, 1838, 2 vols.

(de) Goeje (pronounced: de-Khooya) = M.J. de Goeje, Mémoire sur les Carmathes du Bahraïn et les Fatimides, Leiden, 1886.

Guide = W. Ivanow, A Guide to Ismaili Literature, London, 1933.

Istitār = *K. Istitāru'l-Imām*, by Aḥmad b. Mḥd an-Naysābūrī, ed. by W. Ivanow, Bulletin of the Faculty of Arts, Egyptian University, vol. iv (1939), pp. 93–107.

JA = Journal Asiatique.

JBBRAS = Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society.

JRAS = Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society.

K. = *kitāb*, or *al-kitāb*.

Mémoire, see under (de) Goeje.

R. = *risālat* or *ar-risālat*.

(de) Sacy, *see under* Exposé.

Tabari = Annales quos scripsit Abu Djafar Mohammed Ibn Djarir at-Tabari, ed. M.J. de Goeje (and others), Leiden.

ʻUmda = *ʻUmdatu'ṭ-ṭālib fī ansāb āl ʻAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib*, by Aḥmad b. ʻAlī Ibn ʻInaba, *lith.* Bombay, 1318/1900.

ʻUyūn = *K. ʻUyūnu'l-akhbār* (*wa funūnu'l-āthār fī dhikri'n-Nabiyyi'l-Muṣṭafā'l-Mukhtār*, etc.), by Sayyid-nā ʻImādu'd-dīn Idrīs b. al-Ḥasan b. ʻAbdi'l-lāh b. ʻAlī b. Mḥd b. Ḥātim.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE

Research in any vast subject, especially pioneer work depending on the gradual discovery of new materials, always proceeds by periodical "advances", perfecting or amplifying what had been done earlier. Not rarely the discovery of new facts demands from the student a complete revision of his ideas on the subject, or even the undoing of the work of months, or years. Such periodical revisions are quite in the nature of things; in fact they are nothing but a welcome sign of the progress of research.

It is therefore regrettable to observe that very often the real position of one student remains unknown to other students working in the same field. Ideas or information of his, already rendered obsolete by later finds, are sometimes either taken as the basis of new theories, or disputed and refuted with much waste of energy and time. Such a situation arises not only through the absence of full information as to the other worker's publications, but also the lack of exact knowledge of the extent to which they have become superseded, or have lost their value.

For these reasons I would like to suggest that every publication on a subject of research ought to be furnished with a bibliographical note containing an up-to-date and complete list of all the author's relevant publications, together with a short indication as to the extent to which each of his works, in his own opinion, still preserves its value, and still reflects his views and ideas. Such a practice, if firmly established, would obviate many mistakes and misunderstandings.

Publications of W. Ivanow on Ismaili subjects:

1. Ismaili MSS in the Asiatic Museum of the Russian Academy of Sciences. (*Bulletin de l'Academie Imperial des Sciences*, St. Petersburg, 1917, pp. 359–386, in Russian.) Reliable.
2. Ismailitica, I and II. (*Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Calcutta, vol. viii, 1922, pp. 1—76.) The work was the first publication on Ismaili subjects, and therefore has become obsolete and unreliable to a large extent. In Part I the text is reliable, though some emendations may be introduced. Many comments are no longer good. In Part II information about Ismailis in Kerman is very valuable, as the conditions have lately undergone a great change. The list of the Imams has been superseded by nos. 13, 18 and 19.

3. An Ismailitic Pedigree. (*Journal of the ASB*, Calcutta, 1922, pp. 403–406.) Obsolete. Cf. no. 18.
4. Imam Ismail. (*Journal of the ASB*, Calcutta, 1923, pp. 305–310.) Reliable.
5. Alamut. (*Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, London, 1931, pp. 38–45.) Reliable. Supplemented by no. 21.
6. An Ismailitic Work by Nasiru'd-din Tusi. (*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, London, 1931, pp. 527–564.) Not quite reliable: it was published before proper acquaintance with Ismaili literature, and the comments are not always correct. I have in my possession now an old and correct copy of the same work, and hope to edit it.
7. An Ismaili Interpretation of the Gulshani Raz. (*Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Bombay, 1932, pp. 69–78.) Reliable.
8. Notes sur l'Ummu'l-kitab des Ismaeliens de l'Asie Centrale. (*Revue des Études Islamiques*, Paris, 1932, pp. 419–481, in French.) Reliable.
9. A Guide to Ismaili Literature. (*Prize Publication Fund Series* of the R.A.S., no. 13, London, 1933, pp. xii+138.) Reliable, although in the course of the intervening years much new material has been found, and many minor details are to be corrected.
10. Diwan of Khaki Khorasani. (Persian text with an introduction. *Islamic Research Association Series*, vol. I, 1933, pp. ii+20+128.) Reliable.
11. Two Early Ismaili Treatises. (Haft-babi Baba Sayyid-na, *and* Matlubu'l-mu'minin *by* Tusi. *Islamic Res. Association Series*, vol. II, Bombay, 1933, pp. 9+64.) Reliable.
12. True Meaning of Religion. (Risala dar Haqiqati Din, *by* Shihabu'd-din Shah al-Husayni. *Islamic Res. Association Series*, vol. III, 1933, pp. iii+29+37, Bombay.) Reliable.
13. Kalami Pir *or* Haft Babi Sayyid Nasir. (Persian text with an English translation. *Islamic Research Association Series*, vol. IV, Bombay, 1935, pp. lxviii+146+117.) Reliable.
14. Articles in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Leiden: "Ismailiyya", "Rashidu'd-din Sinan", "Bohora", "Khoja", etc. Reliable.
15. A Creed of the Fatimids. (Bombay, 1936, pp. viii+82.) Reliable, although it differs in some points from the traditional interpretation of the present Ismaili specialists.
16. Ummu'l-kitab. (Persian text with an introduction. *Der Islam*, Berlin, 1936, pp. 1–132.) Reliable.

17. The Sect of Imam-Shah in Gujrat. (*JBBRAS*, Bombay, 1936, pp. 19–70.) Reliable.
18. A Forgotten Branch of the Ismailis. (*JRAS*, London, 1938, pp. 57–79.) Reliable.
19. Tombs of some Persian Ismaili Imams. (*JBBRAS*, Bombay, 1938, pp. 49–62.) Reliable.
20. An Ismaili Ode in Praise of Fidawis. (*JBBRAS*, Bombay, 1938, pp. 63–72.) Reliable.
21. Some Ismaili Strongholds in Persia (Alamut and Girdkuh). (*Islamic Culture*, Hyderabad, 1938, pp. 383–396.) Reliable.
22. Istitaru'l-Imam *and* Sirat Ja'far al-Hajib. (Arabic text.) (*Bulletin of the Faculty of Arts, Egyptian University*, vol. IV (1936), Cairo, 1939, pp. 89–133.) Reliable.
23. The Organisation of the Fatimid Propaganda. (*JBBRAS*, Bombay, 1939, pp. 1–35.) Reliable.
24. Ismailis and Qarmatians. (*JBBRAS*, 1940, pp. 43–85.) Reliable.
25. Early Shi'ite Movements. (*JBBRAS*, 1941, pp. 1–23.) Reliable.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

There is quite a considerable literature concerning Ismailism, its origin, the history of the Fatimid caliphate, and other cognate matters. Numerous works, mediaeval and modern, are specially devoted to this subject. In fact, it would be no exaggeration to say that these matters are generally regarded as well-known, and as constituting no problem, not only in the eyes of educated Muhammadans, but also in those of many orientalists. It seems therefore to be not quite unnecessary to explain why a new publication on these subjects, which introduces to the student the original Ismaili tradition, may not be superfluous or useless.

The triumph of the Fatimid movement, and the brilliant career of the earlier Imams who built a great empire in N. Africa and Egypt, undoubtedly belong to the most momentous periods in the history of the Islamic nations, and of Muslim culture in general. Certain activities of the dynasty evoked far-reaching repercussions, not only within the wide limits of the Islamic world, but even affected the history of the far away Christian Europe, as in the case of the Crusades, for which the policy of some Fatimid caliphs was largely responsible. For all these reasons their history well deserves careful and critical study.

At the same time such a study presents almost unsurmountable difficulties. It is not scarcity of records,—which in fact are abundant,—but the absence of reliable guidance to the inner logic of the Fatimid activities which makes their history liable to misunderstanding. As seen by the eye of the outsider, uninitiated into the complex fabric of the religious base of their authority, their history appears as a fantastic mosaic, composed of the most contradictory, conflicting, and apparently incompatible elements. Periods of remarkable military triumphs, of unprecedented prosperity and security, unparalleled religious tolerance, patronage of learning, art, and other cultural activities, are chaotically

intermixed with periods of great national disasters, famines, internal unrest, armed revolts, terrible defeats, abject misery, outbursts of wild fanaticism and religious persecution, the unprecedented growth of superstition, extremist beliefs, and so forth. The bewildered historian, from whom the secret inner motives of many aspects of the Fatimid activities are hidden, is left entirely to his own efforts to make sense of the capricious and bizarre course of evolution of the Fatimid caliphate.

The mediaeval historian obviously could not be expected to realise that the Fatimid caliphs, in their position of semi-divine kings of the ideal theocratic state, were always under an obligation to comply in their actions with certain popular ideas and ideals, expectations and beliefs, following to a great extent traditional standards set for their activities, which they could alter only with great difficulty. Such hidden springs of their drama have up till now remained inaccessible to students. In the absence of anything better, the mediaeval historian had chiefly to rely upon so-called "thoroughly established facts, well known to every one", in other words on mere popular ideas of the matter, founded upon, and continuously reinforced, by the anti-Fatimid propaganda of the Baghdad caliphs and their supporters. In the course of the long process of such semi-spontaneous and collective accumulation of ideas, and their polishing and adjustment in the course of oral transmission, a consistent and comprehensive picture of Fatimid affairs was evolved. It well merits a special study, and its comparison with the original sectarian version, so far as the latter can be recovered, shows that in fact it was a kind of "negative" version as opposed to the authentic and logical, "positive" version. By a natural process of condensation of colours, under the pressure of religious sentiment, not only has the story become as a whole very dark, but, moreover, every "white" spot in the original has been replaced with a corresponding "black".

Comparing both these versions, we can draw long lists of such opposite parallels. Ismailism, beyond any doubt, was chiefly

based on, and animated by fervent religious sentiment, without which it could have never come into existence:—in the "negative" version it appears as a doctrine of atheism. It was, also quite undoubtedly, one of the most consistent monotheistic systems ever conceived by human mind:—the "negative" version declares that it was really a doctrine of dualism, the "religion of the Magians". The central and fundamental ideal of Ismailism, also common to various Shi'ite sects, was the ultimate triumph of Islam as the sole religion of the world, the ultimate union of mankind in "one flock under one shepherd", i.e. the Imam from the house of the Prophet, who alone can guide long suffering humanity to a righteous and peaceful life, filling the earth with justice and equity even as much as it has always been filled with injustice, oppression, and bestiality:—in the "negative" version we find that Ismailism was "invented to blow up Islam from the inside". In the Shi'ite doctrine the Alid descent of the Imam was one of the primary and indispensable dogmas:—the "negative" version "proves" that al-Mahdī and his successors were the descendants of a Persian heresiarch, or a Jew.

In its pure and complete form this version was probably never used by historians who found themselves too often confronted with facts which demonstrated its absurdity beyond dispute. On such occasions their remedy has been to suggest *their own* compromise version, or some conjectural explanation, through which gradually great confusion has been introduced, and now in fact reigns in the literature of the question. Modern researches, based on the same materials, applied the same method. This is why we learn that Ismailism, an essentially conservative movement, had a "revolutionary" nature, or was created by "Persian nationalistic aspirations", while in reality it was probably the most ruthlessly consistent development of the earliest principles of Islam.

The value of the original Ismaili tradition, even of those "crumbs" of it which alone can now be traced in available genuine Ismaili works, lies in its furnishing the background to the

non-Ismaili information, and yielding clues for the decipherment of many of the implications in a mass of material that had remained a chaos of popular ideas and individual, home-made theories and guesses, usually quite baseless and imaginary. Let there be no illusions about the Ismaili tradition itself: it is profoundly influenced and modified by religious theories, beliefs, superstitions, etc. But there is also no doubt that in the main it preserves a correct idea of the "skeleton" of events, however fragmentary such reminiscences may be. The present work is an attempt at collecting, systematising, and, as far as possible, elucidating the tradition. We are here concerned only with the history of the Fatimid movement *before* its final triumph manifested in the proclamation of al-Mahdī as caliph, in 297/909, in Raqqāda. The reason why this work is limited to this period alone is the difficulty of undertaking a revision of the entire history of the Fatimids. Strange to say, as far as it is possible to see without special study, Ismaili literature as it survives at present preserves relatively much more information concerning the earliest period than concerning the history of the caliphate. That this is not an illusion is clear from the *'Uyūnu'l-akhbār* of Sayyid-nā Idrīs who wrote in the middle of the ninth/fifteenth c. The remarkable meagreness of his information, his thorough dependence on general historical literature, prove beyond doubt that no detailed and genuine historical materials had been preserved in the Ismaili community, probably on account of the tragic end of the dynasty.

It may be added that long established tradition, grown out of the religious controversy, has introduced a certain standard scheme in all works dealing with Fatimid history, even the most modern ones. This scheme consists mainly in tracing the genealogy of the founder, al-Mahdī, and describing the impious doctrine, preached by the dynasty. The first item is not only due to the fact that for mediaeval authors the history of the state was the history of its kings. It seems that it also largely depends on the fact that such genealogy occupied a very prominent place

in the system and works of the Ismailis themselves, because the Alid descent of the Imam was one of the most important dogmas, while the dark period of "occultation" always evoked certain doubts, and demanded special explanations. In a critical study, quite obviously, the question whether al-Mahdī really descended from the Prophet or not, is hardly essential for the historian. It will never be solved beyond dispute, and such a solution is a matter of curiosity only. Even if the Fatimids really had nothing to do with the Prophet, they were at any rate universally recognised as his descendants by their followers, and were compelled to act according to those standards and religious ideals which they undoubtedly would have followed, had they been authentic Alids.

The question of the "origin" of Ismailism, and its "founder" does not arise for the Ismaili: the founder is the Prophet, and the origin is the Divine Revelation of Islam. The mediaeval mentality had no ideas of evolution or the collective work of generations, and could not grasp the most complex process which formed the full-grown Ismaili doctrine. For mediaeval man religious doctrine was always eternal, unchangeable, even if founded by the supposed heretics. Therefore the malicious Ibn al-Qaddāḥ, who lived in the second/eighth c., must be made to invent the Ismaili doctrine of the fifth/eleventh c., and later. It is pathetic to study the learned discussions of critical, up-to-date scholars as to whether Ibn al-Qaddāḥ was, or was not, the "founder" of the doctrine.

With regard to the doctrine itself, and its evolution, the Ismaili tradition, quite naturally, does not give any direct indications; as far as possible while handling purely religious material, the matter is avoided in the present work. The question can only be treated by means of critical and thorough study of the earliest available Ismaili works. It may be noted, however, that the very facts of the history of the Fatimid movement were by no means something entirely unconnected with its religious evolution. There is not the slightest doubt that the evolution of

the doctrine was inseparably, as body and soul, connected with the development of the political successes of the movement, its expansion, its political aims, and so forth. And *vice versa,* ideological and political considerations were strongly influenced by the evolving system of dogma, both its theory and popular beliefs. This is particularly noticeable in such an important and cardinal point as the doctrine of the Imamat. Uncontrollable events in family life could alter the originally simple and consistent theories, while the theory itself could influence dynastic decisions.

In addition to this there is no doubt that an important process was silently and unostentatiously at work for a long time. The unprecedented successes of the Fatimids which placed them at the head of the whole Shi'ite movement undoubtedly attracted to them a huge number of recruits from various decaying Shi'ite schools. These people brought with them a great many ideas which had to be adjusted to, and amalgamated with, the standard Ismaili theory. In fact, it is possible to discern sometimes quite clearly that theories and logical consequence carried little weight even in purely theoretical speculations. Many theories appear which are indubitably introduced as compromises, explanations, or apologies to justify certain acts or changes in the system required by irrational events. All such alterations are carefully built up in the usual traditional style.

The value of the original Ismaili historical tradition is not limited only to the chance of a better understanding of the substratum of the doctrinal evolution, and the course of the events which determined the further destinies of the Fatimid movement under their caliphate. Reliable knowledge of the details of their experiment is of immense importance to the study of the major problem of Shi'ism in general, because the Fatimid caliphate was the only known large scale instance of the realisation of the Shi'ite dreams and theories concerning the Alid theocratic state.

Under the influence of the "negative" propaganda version not only mediaeval, but even modern historians acquiesce in the idea that Ismailism was something different from Islam. They

thus disregard the immensely important fact that in reality it was the leading and the most typical and developed school of Shi'ism. The latter itself, according to these ideas, was merely a "political" movement, or rather "ubiquitous Alid intrigue", a long series of risings on the part of the numerous Alid adventurers, impudently outraging that authority of the Omayyads and Abbasids which had been "established by law". Even in the most up-to-date researches we read that only after a long period of time did Shi'ism begin to develop its own religious doctrine, and even this took the form of absurd and fantastic sectarian beliefs. Views of this kind undoubtedly require thorough revision.

References to the original Shi'ite sources suggest that there was little material difference in the doctrine of the various Shi'ite schools (just as there was not much difference between Shi'ite and non-Shi'ite Islam) as far as concerns their real *religious* beliefs and forms of worship, apart of those abstruse theosophical speculations with which the rank and file of the community had nothing to do. Ismailism, under the most able guidance of the early Fatimids, achieved a great success, while all other sects, including the school to which later on was conceded recognition as the "orthodox" Shi'ite doctrine, the Ithna-'ashari, were disorganised and depleted, lost their influence, and in many cases entirely disappeared.

Ample material means, the position of a sovereign state, and especially the great enthusiasm of the masses, permitted Ismailism to develop its doctrine and create a large literature to the extent which no other branch of Shi'ism could have dreamt of producing at the time. In fact, Ismailism anticipated many advanced phases in the evolution of general Islamic thought, which were to appear centuries later. It was, above all, this precipitate advance which created the illusion of the "rupture" with the more backward circles of Islam. In reality it was a grave disservice to Ismailism because it furnished the pretext for

propaganda which misinterpreted their philosophy, and raised the cry that the movement was "outside the pale of Islam".

From a purely critical point of view, Ismailism was undoubtedly the most catholic and highly developed form of Shi'ism, and is thus invaluable for the study and understanding of the Shi'ite mind in general. The part of the latter in Islamic culture progress was resolutely obscured by anti-Shi'ite sources, and its real extent and implications are only now beginning to dawn upon us. There is no doubt that serious researches will inevitably bring to light much more material which will necessitate a thorough revision of existing ideas and theories, and, as a result, the rewriting of many pages in the history of the Islamic civilisation.

I. SOURCES.

It appears that every reference to the Ismailis found in ·eneral literature has already been brought to light, and no mportant and substantial materials remain unused. A complete bibliography was published in 1922 by L. Massignon, in his "Esquisse d'une Bibliographic Qarmaṭe" (in the "Volume of Oriental Studies presented to Professor E. G. Browne", pp. 329–338). Additions to his list have of late been published periodically by A. A. A. Fyzee, in the JBBRAS, Bombay, in 1935, 1936 and 1940. These lists include the Ismaili and non-Ismaili Islamic works, and the studies by different orientalists.

Most probably all early non-sectarian authors, when writing about the origin of Ismailism and the Fatimid dynasty, when they do not offer their own theories, derive their information rom a few original sources. And these themselves are ultimately ased on a few Ismaili works, especially the *Iftitāḥu'd-da'wa* of āḍī Nu'mān (cf. further on), or perhaps some other early authors hose names have not come down to us. The information de-ved from these early works was gradually adulterated by arious additions, or perversions of the original statements, or 'condensation", or intensification of the alleged hereticism. And nally, when numerous versions were in circulation, these were ill further perverted under the influence of different theories, so hat ultimately lost all historical value. To trace this process, nd to extract and systematise all that hitherto has been made cessible to students in this matter, would be an exceedingly eful work. It would form a fascinating subject for a doctorate esis, or the initial work of a serious research student, working somewhere within easy reach of a large and up-to-date library.

With genuine Ismaili sources remaining inaccessible, and general sources being much adulterated, fragmentary, and ofte

perfectly worthless, the works of different orientalists mostly were "movements in darkness". Except few they mostly preserve any value only as raw material,—in so far as they edit or translate original sources, either Ismaili or non-Ismaili. In their own conclusions and deductions different authors usually place too much confidence on the "contemporary testimony", despite the obvious fact that it is seriously corrupted by bitter religious and political jealousies and enmities. The result was that the same hostile attitude crept into. and continued at work, in what were intended as critical and perfectly impartial studies. Thus, in spite of more than a hundred years of research, and the publication of many interesting contributions, the problem remains as insoluble as it was in the beginning.

Genuine Ismaili works have been not entirely unknown in European libraries for many decades past. But, strangely, they never attracted the attention of the students to the extent which they really deserved.[1] And now that at last the way has been opened to direct acquaintance with Ismaili literature, we may take stock of what is generally available. It would be proper to say that genuine Ismaili literature, being entirely religious in its interests, completely ignored history. Its authors and readers most probably relied on the general historical works. As shown further on, there is, for the earlier period, strictly speaking, only one historical work,—Qāḍī Nu'mān's *Iftitāḥu'd-da'wa.* The next group of works, which to some extent may yield historical information, is hagiological tradition. This group also contains very few works. The next, also very limited group, is that of works on controversy,—just a few that contain allusions to historical facts. Finally comes the material which forms the main contents of Ismaili literature, namely the esoteric speculations, *ḥaqā'iq*. Here, in the mystic twilight, facts and things of this world lose their ordinary features and outlines, laws of logic and commonsense often disappear, and we enter the enchanted

[1] Cf. further on, the beg. of Chapter V.

realm of dreams, mirages, visions, symbols, and the most unceremonious twisting and falsification of history.

However, genuine historical information is so scarce in Ismaili literature that we cannot afford to neglect or disregard anything, and must do our best to avoid overlooking an interesting indication merely on account of its being disguised in religious garb.

There is an important matter to be noted about these esoteric works, as about the exoteric and esoteric matters in general. Every student of Ismailism must properly realise the fact that the terms *ẓāhir* and *bāṭin*, i.e. exoteric and esoteric, do not completely coincide with the terms "plain" and "secret". There are things which have nothing to do with esoteric matters, and yet are kept secret, and there are many esoteric doctrines which are not concealed.

The *ẓāhir* matters kept secret are mostly those which are either unflattering to the Ismailis, or which do not fit in with their religious theories, or which are suppressed because they would stir up enmity in their opponents if they reached their knowledge. Sometimes such *ẓāhir* matters thus kept secret are really surprising, e.g. the names of different heresiarchs, or of erring and heretical sects. Books are written to refute their doctrines, but their names are omitted!

It would be better to understand the term *ẓāhir* as "general Islamic", or simply "general", while the terms *bāṭin*[1] and *ḥaqā'iq* may be taken as meaning "specially Ismaili". There is no special secret about elementary esoteric doctrines, although generally *everything* in Ismaili doctrine and Ismaili literature is regarded as secret: it should not be taken outside the community. But real secrecy, even within the Ismaili community, is reserved only for those books which require a considerable amount of education and religious training to insure the reader against the

[1] The term *bāṭin* is mostly used in genuine Ismaili works as a substantive, in the sense of the inner meaning revealed by *ta'wīl*, or allegorical interpretation. Apparently it is never applied to the works, or doctrines.

misfortune of being misled through misunderstanding them. A well-known example may suffice: the Encyclopaedia of the *Ikhwānu'ṣ-ṣafā*, copies of which one can buy in any bookshop, is regarded as "secret".[1]

There is another point to be made clear. It is generally believed that information preserved in esoteric works is more reliable than that in the *ẓāhir* works, because esoteric works are intended for the "chosen few", not for the "duped, fooled, and fleeced" masses. This would be perfectly logical; but in fact it is entirely erroneous, in so far as it refers to historical matters, not to religious. However surprising this may appear, the real case is the reverse of this.

Where we have an opportunity to compare the versions of one and the same event as found in the *ẓāhir* and in the *ḥaqā'iq* works, we find very often that these versions differ considerably, not only as to the details, but as to the substance, and that the esoteric version for the most part is a favourite folk-lore motive, or simply a superstitious fiction, based on the mystical meaning of numbers, association of individual letters, etc. The best illustrations can be derived from two well-known works of one and the same highly authoritative author, Sayyid-nā Idrīs,—his *ẓāhir* work *'Uyūnu'l-akhbār*, and his esoteric treatise *Zahru'l--ma'ānī*. In the Chapter XVII of the latter there is given what may be called the "secret" and esoteric version of the history of the Imams, accounts of their real position, importance, etc. One typical example will suffice.

Every student of Ismailism knows the historical accounts of that fateful night when the aged al-Mustanṣir unexpectedly died after a short and apparently not very serious illness, and the princes and other dependents were urgently summoned to the palace only to find that the all-powerful commander in chief had

[1] I have already sufficiently explained this in the introduction to my "Guide to Ismaili Literature", p. 19 sq., and during the years which have elapsed since its publication I have not found anything to make me alter my opinion.

already placed his own son-in-law, the youngest prince Musta'lī, upon the throne, and required them to take the oath of allegiance to him. There are different versions of what had really happened, — quite naturally, indeed. But it is quite clear that the eldest prince, the original heir apparent, Nizār, under one pretext or other, escaped, and took refuge in Alexandria, claiming his rights. The events happened in the full light of history, and there is very little doubt as to their real trend.

But this is what we find in the esoteric version, reserved for the "trusted few" only, and withheld from the masses: when Mawlā-nā al-Mustanṣir died, his sons came together, and started to dispute as to their rights to succeed him. No decision could be reached. Then *Dhū'l-fiqār* (or *Dhū'l-faqār*), the legendary sacred sword of 'Alī, was produced (from the unseen ?). All princes in turn tried their utmost to unsheath the sacred sword, but in vain. At last al-Musta'lī made an attempt. And lo! The sword came out smoothly and easily. Thus it was clear to every one present that al-Musta'lī had the right to succeed.[1]

This popular motive of many fairy tales of different nations, should, according to the ideas mentioned above, be taken in preference to the *ẓāhir* versions. And there are many similar cases. If any valuable information can be gathered from esoteric works, it can only be derived from careful analysis of different contradictory statements, lapses, passing references "out of the focus of attention", etc. It must be made an elementary general rule ***never to trust*** esoteric and mystic authors, unless their statements are supported from other sources. The *ẓāhir* version should always be preferred, where there is a conflict between the two.

Mystics, and believers in esoteric matters, live in a different world, of different values. Their logic and judgment are completely dominated by religious emotions, and if these clash with

[1] Cf. also the introduction to *al-Hidāyatu'l-Āmiriyya*, ed. by A. A. A. Fyzee, pp. 14-15.

facts, the facts have to give way to the sentiment. Going through what may be called the esoteric interpretation of history, in general and individual cases, one finds in esoteric works falsification and twisting of facts to be a rule, to which there are but few exceptions. Facts are made to fit spurious prophecies, mystical theories about the symbolism of numbers, astrological predictions, religious ideas, and popular superstitions. The idea of conveying unvarnished truth to the chosen few, for whom such works are intended, is perfectly alien to the mystic mind; and there are *no limits* to the most unscrupulous falsification.

The earliest historical work in Ismaili literature, and apparently the only one which is almost completely free from religious adjustment of facts, is the *Iftitāḥu'd-da'wa wa ibtidā'u'd-dawla*, completed in the beginning of 346/957, by the great jurist and theologian of the early Fatimids, "Qāḍī Nu'mān", i.e. Abū Ḥanīfa an-Nu'mān b. Muḥammad at-Tamīmī (who died in 363/974), cf. *Guide*, no. 103. The author, a native of Qayrawān (near the present Tunis), entered the service of al-Mahdī in 313/925, i.e. about fifteen years after his enthronement. It is therefore quite natural to find in his work complete familiarity with local conditions.

His book was apparently intended for the general public as much as for the Ismailis, and probably was not kept secret in Fatimid times. The author does not enter in this work into the discussion of the religious aspect of the campaign of the founders of the dynasty, or their religious claims. It seems that all information about the conquest of N. Africa by the Fatimids, found in different works of general literature, is directly or indirectly derived from this source. It is very pleasant to hear that Dr. B. Lewis, as he twice mentions in his "Origins of Ismā'īlism" (pp. 16 and 75), is preparing an edition of it. There are several copies of the work in Europe, and it really deserves a good edition.

The author takes matters from the point of view of a general historian; contrary to the habit of the great majority of Islamic

historians, he does not write a laudatory account of the events which centred round the subject of his glorification. His master, al-Mahdī, appears on the stage only in the last part of the book. For this reason, although the work is directly connected with our subject, i.e. the career of al-Mahdī, it gives very little information which can be used in the present study.

Apparently the influence and popularity of this early work was responsible for the appearance of other writings on historical subjects, and, beyond doubt, of the *Istitāru'l-Imām*, compiled under al-'Azīz (365–386/975–996) by Aḥmad b. Muḥammad (or Ibrāhīm) an-Naysābūrī (probably a Persian), cf. *Guide*, no. 112. He is the author of several well-known theological works: his *Ithbātu'l-Imāmat*, and *az-Zāhira fī ma'rifati'd-dāri'l-ākhira* (cf. *Guide*, 114 and 115) are very popular, while another of his works which seems to have been very interesting, *al-Mūjizatu'l-kāfiya* (*Guide*, 113), on the organisation of the Fatimid propaganda, is preserved only in the quotations in the *Tuḥfatu'l-qulūb*.[1]

There is no doubt that he knew the *Iftitāḥ*, as may be seen from the passage at the end of the work, in which he refers to the further journey of al-Mahdī, and his being looted by brigands near Ṭāḥūna.[2] It is quite probable that his purpose was to supplement the *Iftitāḥ* with information which it did not contain, namely the antecedents of al-Mahdī before his experiences in Sijilmāsa.

With the kind collaboration of my friends, Dr. P. Kraus, Dr. Kāmil Ḥusayn, and Mr. Ḥ. A'ẓamī, this work, together with the *Sīra* of Ja'far al-Ḥājib, has been edited by me in the "Bulletin of the Faculty of Arts of the Egyptian University" (for 1936, issued in 1939, pp. 93–133). For technical reasons it was impossible to publish a translation and notes together with the text; therefore the English version is given further on in the present volume.

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[1] A summary of this, and different details are offered in my paper, "The Organisation of the Fatimid Propaganda", JBBRAS, 1939, pp. 1–35.

[2] Cf. *Istitār*, text, p. 106.

It must be carefully noted that in all translations given here the beginnings of the corresponding pages of the original Arabic text are marked by heavy type figures. References in the index to such combined text-and-translation units are given in heavy type. In he case of the Istitār *and* Sīra *the original Arabic text is that of the edition mentioned above.*

There are works which produce an extremely good *first* impression, inspiring complete confidence as to their reliability and trustworthiness. This, however, completely evaporates at the first touch of critical analysis. Works which are in the reverse position are much rarer. And one of these seems to be the *Istitār*. Its author, as may be seen from its shortness and "sketchiness", apparently did not attach much importance to his work, and neither apparently did many generations of the Ismailis: it was a pleasant trifle, sufficiently religious in contents to be preserved in a thoroughly religious literature, but not serious enough to attract the unwelcome attention of falsifiers. It was this circumstance which protected and preserved it to this day.

The first impression of the *Istitār*, as every one can see for himself by reading its translation here without comments, is very poor,—it looks as if it had been written specially for entertainment, with no regard to historical truth. It seems to be rather superficial, sacrificing too much to dramatisation of the narrative, introducing many details which are closely reminiscent of the Arabian Nights. But all this vanishes when we study carefully what it contains beneath the outer entertaining form, by scrutinizing every statement, and collating it with available reliable sources.

Only then does it become clear that in the *Istitār* we have precious crumbs of information about a period which is a lost world in history, information which cannot be found anywhere else, and which was saved from inevitable oblivion by the desire of Sayyid-nā Aḥmad an-Naysābūrī to offer his readers an entertaining piece of reading. Legend occupies a prominent

part in his narrative, but this probably was all that he could find.

Taking the story of the events for which we have an excellent source of information, the Annals of Tabari, who was himself a contemporary, we must admit that not only does the version of the *Istitār* seem to be perfectly reliable, but, pieced together with what is found in Tabari, it permits us to reconstruct the picture of the time with rare completeness and convincing inner logic. Tabari's reports are substantial, but lack cohesion and inner co-relation. When combined in one with the version found in the *Istitār*, things that are obscure and isolated in his Annals at once appear in their true light.

Scrutinizing details, it is easy to see that such small but rather important indications as references to local conditions, distances between places mentioned in the story, etc., leave no doubt as to the author's perfectly reliable knowledge of the country. The narrative itself, with different details which would not be very flattering to early Ismailism, such as the defection of the chief *dā'ī*, or the strange behaviour of some of al-Mahdī's associates, shows a sincere intention to give a true version, as far, indeed, as the religious mentality of the author permitted it. All this makes the reader change his attitude completely, and, what is very important, inspires a certain amount of confidence also in those portions of the story which refer to much earlier events,—that dark period which followed the death of Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl.

As we shall see later on, all early Ismaili sources which are accessible now, refer with great obscurity to the intervening links between Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl and al-Mahdī, the "three concealed Imams", without mentioning their names. Apparently it was a grave sin to mention their names. Anyhow, this was avoided. And although there probably were some early hagiological works in which legends about these early Imams were collected,—the reports which are incorporated in the fourth

volume of the *'Uyūnu'l-akhbār* of Sayyid-nā Idrīs,[1]—it is obvious that such information, for some obscure reasons, was not popularised amongst the masses. It seems probable, however, that this work was the *only* source of Sayyid-nā Idrīs for the information about the second half of the third/ninth c. In any case, he derives some stories from the *Istitār*, and has nothing to add from elsewhere. We shall refer to the contents of this work while discussing the Ismaili version of the genealogy of al-Mahdī.

Next comes the *Sīra*, or autobiography of Ja'far al-Ḥājib, which usually forms one small volume with the *Istitār*. It was, most probably, composed earlier than the latter, probably in the beginning of the reign of al-'Azīz (365–386/975–996), by Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Yamānī. In any case it was composed after 346/957, the date of the completion of the *Iftitāḥ*, to which it refers (p. 125 of the text) under the title of *Kitāb fī ibtidā'i'd-da'wati'ṭ-Ṭālibiyya* (for some reason the author avoids the use of such terms as Fāṭimī, 'Alawī, etc.).

The student may at first feel suspicious about this work. The figure of al-Mahdī, although historical beyond all doubt after his enthronement, is something like a phantom before this date,—nothing is certain about him, his career before he is proclaimed caliph. And here we find a detailed story of his departure from Salamiyya, and different details of his experiences; it looks odd: he laughs, eats, has a haircut, buys slaves, etc. But, just as in the case of the *Istitār*, there is no doubt as to the genuineness of the work: it is too clever and sophisticated for a falsification. There are cases of falsification in Ismaili literature. To mention one,—the "autobiography" of Nāṣiri Khusraw in the *Kalāmi Pīr*. But the fact of falsification leaps to the eye from every word of it. In the *Sīra* of Ja'far there is too much exaggeration of the author's own part; his personal matters block too much the vision of the events and the figure of his master. But this is

[1] Cf. my "Ismailis and Qarmatians", JBBRAS, 1940, pp. 43–85, where the story of Sayyid-nā Idrīs about Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl and his sons is translated.

exactly what we should expect: the work obviously was written to remind the old servant's masters about his exceptional services. The point of view of the author of the opuscule, looking at his master and the events in which he participated from the position of an old intimate servant, and of the domestic occurrences, with which he was primarily concerned, is perfectly genuine. There is no sign of its being artificially introduced,—it seems sincere from the beginning to the end. It is also very interesting that on several occasions the author plainly confesses that he cannot remember correctly owing to remoteness of the events.[1] Moreover, the compiler carefully notes all cases in which information was received not directly from Ja'far, but indirectly, through some one else.[2] For all these reasons I do not think there can be any doubt as to the work being on the whole a genuine document of the time. It seems also that the text is quite well preserved, without any traces of attempts to interfere with it. In my edition I used several independent copies, and recently collated it with yet another copy, belonging to my friend A. A. A. Fyzee, and dated 1155/1742, finding no traces of real variants.[3]

The work contains many interesting details, and, if we have to admit its genuineness, it means that together with this we have to admit the genuineness of the account of the hero,—al-Mahdī. A complete translation of the original is given further on, and an analysis of its contents, in so far as al-Mahdī is concerned, is given in the chapter dealing with his genealogy.

It may be added here that although the *Sīra* of Ja'far never mentions Ustādh Jawdhar, and his *Sīra*, just as the latter never refers to the former, there must be some connection between both these works. It is difficult to discover who originated the idea of compiling such a work, whether al-Manṣūr al-Jawdharī, the secretary of Jawdhar, or the compiler of the *Sīra* of Ja'far.

[1] Cf. pages 120, 123, 127.
[2] Cf. pages 124, 125, 127.
[3] The different readings are given in the footnotes to the corresponding places of the translation, and the copy is called F.

Ustādh Jawdhar, a court slave, one of the *ṣaqāliba* at Raqqāda, entered the service of al-Mahdī after his triumph over the Aghlabids. He was apparently a sort of an accountant or secretary. Later in his life he occupied position of trust, and held high rank in the service of the Imams. As may be seen on many occasions, his religious position was quite exceptional.[1] His *Sīra*, dictated by himself to his secretary, is much bigger than that of Ja'far. But while the latter reads like the scenario of a high class historical film, the *Sīra* of Jawdhar is intolerably boring: the elements of self advertisement and of emphasis on his own importance are incomparably more prominent here than in Ja'far's memoirs. It contains nothing which is of use to us in our present research, because during the reign of al-Mahdī, the author was too young, and originally had no connection with Ismailism; he only came in touch with political life at a much later period. The only redeeming feature of his work is the large number of quotations from the original papers of the Fatimids connected with their financial and administrative policy; although mercilessly abridged, they may well deserve a careful investigation by students of the internal policy of the early Fatimids.

Passing from historical and biographical works to those on Ismaili religious tradition, we must first of all mention a most important compendium produced by the same Qāḍī Nu'mān,—the *Sharḥu'l-akhbār*. As may be seen from references scattered in the text, it was one of the latest works of the learned Qāḍī. In any case it was composed after the *Iftitāḥ*, *Da'ā'imu'l-Islām*, and *al-Majālis wa'l-musāyarāt*, which are referred to. Thus it was probably completed some time between 350/961 and 360/971.

This is one of the earliest compendia of Shi'ite tradition, obviously based on a number of early works subsequently lost. It therefore deserves the most careful study. Some of its sec-

[1] Cf. further on, in the extracts from the *Zahru'l-ma'ānī* by Sayyid-nā Idrīs, when he deals with the biographies of al-Mahdī and al-Qā'im. The story is of unique interest.

tions, especially those dealing with early Shi'ite movements, deserve special notice.[1] It forms two bulky volumes of about a thousand pages or more altogether, and is divided into sixteen parts (*juz'*). We are here concerned chiefly with parts 14 and 15. The first deals with tradition concerning the Imams, from Ja'far aṣ-Ṣādiq to al-Mahdī. Part 15 contains prophecies and supernatural signs proving the high mission of al-Mahdī; the first half of this part contains an interesting collection of early popular beliefs and expectations connected with the Shi'ite dream; the second half consists of paraphrases of the corresponding portions of the *Iftitāḥ*, repeating the story of the mission of Ibn Ḥawshab, i.e. Manṣūru'l-Yaman, with his extraordinary successes, and their continuation by the other *dā'ī*, Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh ash-Shī'ī, in the Maghrib. Only one passage, edited in original Arabic further on (Texts, pp. 31–34), is concerned with our present research. The further possibility may be mentioned that casual references to the same matters of some interest may be gathered from a careful examination of other works of Qāḍī Nu'mān,— such as *al-Majālis wa'l-musāyarāt*, or *al-Manāqib li-ahl bayt Rasūli'l-lāh* (cf. *Guide*, nos. 100, 102), although the information yielded by the examination of these bulky works may be very small.[2]

The next item to mention is the '*Uyūnu'l-akhbār* of Sayyid-nā Idrīs ('Imādu'd-dīn Idrīs b. al-Ḥasan, the 19th *dā'ī* of the Yaman, d. 872/1468, cf. *Guide*, no. 258). The work is in seven large volumes, and the portion with which we are here concerned is the end of the fourth vol. (completed in 842/1438), and the beginning of the fifth. Compared with a brilliant mind such as that of Qāḍī Nu'mān, we have to deal here with a much inferior intellect. The author's narrow Yamanite outlook, his super-

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[1] Cf. my paper "Early Shi'ite Movements", JBBRAS, 1941, pp. 1–23.

[2] Qāḍī Nu'mān composed a work specially devoted to the religious aspects of the career of al-Mahdī,— the *Ma'ālimu'l-Mahdī* (cf. *Guide*, 101). Unfortunately, it is lost; therefore it is difficult to decide whether the corresponding pages of the *Sharḥu'l-akhbār* are based on it (as other parts are based on various other earlier works of the author); or whether, perhaps, what is now treated as a separate book, is in reality an extract from the *Sharḥu'l-akhbār*.

stitiousness, his irritating method of never mentioning the sources, either Ismaili or non-Ismaili, which he freely uses, his readiness to pass at a moment's notice from historical narrative to the preaching of elementary and well-known religious matters, make his work extremely disappointing. On fuller analysis this impression gains strength. The first four volumes are almost completely copied from the *Sharḥu'l-akhbār*, with occasional patches borrowed from other works. The account of al-Mahdī is a *verbatim* copy of the *Iftitāḥ*. His concealment of his sources is very treacherous: it is impossible to be certain on many occasions whether the source is Ismaili, or anti-Ismaili. In any case, his work must be handled with special caution.

This list really exhausts the historical works in Ismaili literature concerned with our period. The bulky *sixth* vol. of the well-known *Kitābu'l-azhār* (*Guide*, 275), by a highly talented Indian Ismaili, Ḥasan b. Nūḥ b. Yūsuf b. Muḥammad of Bharūch (Broach) (d. 939/1533), dealing with the historical matters, yields nothing new. It is very lengthy (over 1350 pages), and is a collection of quotations from the *'Uyūnu'l-akhbār*. Another modern work, also by an Indian, Shaykh Quṭb Burhānpūrī, who flourished towards the end of the XIIth/XVIIIth c. (cf. *Guide*, no. 335),—*Muntaza'u'l-akhbār*, is merely an epitome of the *' Uyūnu'l-akhbār*, to which, as a second volume, is added a concise history of the post-Fatimid period, based on different sources. This later part seems to be of more value, for its particular subject.

To pass from works on religious tradition to esoteric works is like passing from a religious school to the temple itself. In tradition there may be something new, some acquisition of fresh information. In esoteric and dogmatic works one has to deal with things eternal, revealed by God, unchangeable and not to be criticised. The purpose of the authors of the different works is not to convey new knowledge, but to explain and present in a more attractive, convincing and clearer form those eternal truths, which are already well known to the adherents of the sect. This

is the sphere of religious art, in which the question of "how" is everything, because "what" is already known. Every author vies with the other in the invention of novel ways to prove what has been already proved differently a hundred times. As usual in such matters, the earliest works are invariably the more original and attractive by reason of their freshness and sincerity. Gradually, in the course of time, these writings become more and more overgrown with habitual associations, routine, and imitation; they become stereotyped, pedantic, petty minded, soulless. In Ismaili esoteric literature it is only in the earliest period that one finds erudite works such as those of Abū Ḥātim Rāzī and Ḥamīdu'd-dīn Kirmānī, full of real philosophic effort. Later on the spirit evaporates, and the speculations degenerate into manipulation of ready made ideas and sentences. Still later, in the provincial surroundings of the Yaman and the stagnant atmosphere of the middle ages, crude superstition spreads very widely. From the earliest simple and clear works one passes by degrees to ponderous volumes which claim to be the most secret revelations of extraordinary mysteries. A good example is the *Shumūsu'ẓ-ẓāhira* by Sayyid-nā Ḥātim b. Ibrāhīm (d. 596/1199), cf. *Guide*, no. 205. Here, side by side with the most abstruse speculations on the system of emanations, and on the mysteries of the creation of the universe, one meets the most learned and ponderous discussions of such important questions as why, according to the words of Ja'far aṣ-Ṣādiq, the *Jinn* do not like the proximity of a bath-house (*ḥammām*), and flee from the place in which one is built ?[1]

In esoteric speculations connected with the subject of our research several matters should be noted. The most important is what may be called the symbolical parallelism of events. Whatever the true history of the Imams, their genealogy, succession, etc., these *had to be* nothing but a complete parallel and

[1] As is known, Fatimid Ismailism regards the ideas of the Jinn and angels as abstractions, denoting certain natural and cosmic energies. The whole matter is therefore a highly abstruse speculation.

repetition of the events connected with the precursors of the Imams and Prophets. Generations of learned Ismailis, including a man as really clever as Qāḍī Nu'mān, wasted their time and energy with amazing persistence in tracing such parallelism in the legends of the great prophets of ancient times. If the Founder of Islam left as his successor 'Alī, according to the Shi'ite doctrine, it was *because* his remote ancestor Abraham had done this or that with his son Ismā'īl, etc. The idea is traced through the legends of all the prophets, from Adam onwards, and huge efforts are expended in forcing these into uniform terms. It may be noted that such reference to precedents in religious history is a prominent feature of the Coran itself; the Ismailis only carried the method to its extreme. In such speculations all difference between the historic case and its legendary prototype gradually disappears, and the sense of reality is often lost: is the author referring to Ismā'īl b. Ja'far, the Ismaili Imam, or to Ismā'īl son of Abraham? All this seriously affects the reliability of historical information, because, consciously or unconsciously, the authors of the esoteric works force the real events to resemble as much as possible the circumstances in the legend. Sometimes historical personages are referred to under the names of their Biblical prototypes. A quotation (Texts, p. 81–106) from one of such *ta'wīl* works, by Ja'far b. Manṣūri'l-Yaman, is offered; it clearly shows how much confusion can be introduced by enthusiastic practitioners of this method.

The second important point is the superstitious belief in the mystical implications of numbers. The belief is obviously of immense antiquity, based on one of the most fundamental properties of the human mind. Rhythm, the sense of symmetry and dissymmetry, obviously is one of the most primitive elements of our spatial perception. It is quite natural that its projection upon the perception of the universe should have worked at all times as a powerful stimulus to human curiosity. Pythagoras with his numerous successors was one of many early sages to take up the matter very seriously. The middle ages, with their

cabbalistic speculations, had a firm faith in the reality of such a rhythm of things in the visible world. In the esoteric Ismaili doctrine this idea is an indisputable assumption. Hence springs the "Sevenership" of the Ismailis, and all their doctrines of seven *Nāṭiqs*, seven *Imāms*, etc.[1] The force of these superstitious ideas was immense, and historical facts were bent and twisted mercilessly to fit them. Astrological speculations, to some extent also connected with such numerical periodism, also contributed very much to the falsification of history, as de Goeje has already carefully elucidated it in his "Mémoire" (pp. 69–73). I am giving an extract from the late esoteric work, *Zahru'l-ma'ānī*,[2] by Sayyid-nā Idrīs, which is a typical example of this mentality. There was another form of the same numerical mysticism in the speculations regarding the number values of different names found in the system of the Druzes. In the Ismaili system it seems that they were not so popular.

Apparently the earliest esoteric work which contains some information useful for our purposes is a mystic work of Sayyid-nā Ja'far b. Manṣūri'l-Yaman, the famous author of highly valued

[1] However strange this may sound, the early beliefs in the cycle of Seven Imams, and that the expected Messiah would be the *Seventh* of them, were shared by the Ithna-'asharis. The great compendium of the Shi'ite tradition, the *Biḥāru'l-anwār* of Majlisī (vol. XIII), in dealing with the *ḥadīths* and *akhbār* predicting the advent of the Mahdī, quotes several prophecies in which he is expected to be "the son of six" (*ibn sitta*). The author tries to offer his own explanations, which are not in the least convincing.

[2] Usually the title is pronounced *Zahru'l-ma'ānī* (with *a* in *Zahr*). But Dr. Zahid Ali, Professor of Arabic in the Nizam College, Haydarabad, himself a Bohora, has kindly explained to me that all *learned* Bohoras pronounce it *Zuhr*, with *u*, because the word is the Plural from *azhar*, "brilliant, shining, beautiful". To me this seems sensible, because the work deals with *many* subjects, practically covering the whole field of Ismaili dogmatics. Therefore the title such as "(Many) beautiful ideas" (or subjects) would appear to be more appropriate than "A flower of ideas", in case we read *Zahru'l-ma'ānī*. But there is no doubt that there are no rules or logical grounds in the choice of florid titles of works in Arabic. In addition to this, there is a general tendency in India to pronounce Arabic words mostly with *a*: *nasrat* (= *nuṣrat*), *hazar Imam* (*ḥāḍir Imām*), etc. Anyhow, as this is rather immaterial, and as other learned Ismailis whom I consulted prefer the reading *Zahr*, I leave it as it is pronounced by the majority.

esoteric writings, a contemporary of Qāḍī Nu'mān,—the *Asrāru'n-nuṭaqā'* (cf. *Guide*, no. 43).[1] The son, or, most probably, grand-son, of the conqueror of the Yaman, he, as often happens, had not inherited the qualities of his ancestor. Probably having had a good start as the relative of such a celebrity, he could never rise above pretentious mystic speculations, which as far as can be seen, are heavy and unoriginal.

The *Asrāru'n-nuṭaqā'* is closely connected with his other work, the *Sarā'iru'n-nuṭaqā'*, being apparently a revised and amplified version of the latter. The *Sarā'iru'n-nuṭaqā'* deals summarily with the mystical symbolism of the Coranic legends regarding the earliest great prophets, Ādam, Nūḥ, and Ibrāhīm, and ends with two different explanations of the CXIth *sūra* of the Coran (*tabbat yadā Abī Lahab*).

The *Asrāru'n-nuṭaqā'*, which was composed about 380/990,[2] is apparently a new version of the preceding work. The first fifty pages or so are taken from the earlier book, and, from the story of Ibrāhīm onwards, the version has been considerably amplified. At the end there are some very interesting references to Ismā'īl b. Ja'far which I shall set out without any attempt to condense the story, so that this extract may serve at the same time as a good specimen of this kind of works. The main subject of the book is the story of Ibrāhīm, and the proofs of the right of Ismā'īl b. Ja'far to the Imamat. It contains a strong controversial element, directed against the Ithna-'asharis. In this

[1] I am much indebted to Mr. A. A. A. Fyzee for his having kindly lent to me a precious copy from his collection, an old Yamanite manuscript, dated the 8th Dhī'l-Qa'da 742/15 Apr. 1342.

[2] This may be inferred from the words of the author that 120 years have passed since the "disappearance" of the last Imam of the Twelvers in 260/874. But we need not take this figure as perfectly accurate,—it is obviously approximate, and the date of the work would, most probably, be a little earlier. Therefore it seems to me clear that the author was not the *son*, but most probably a *grand-son* of Ibn Ḥawshab. If the latter was an adult in 266/880, who could be entrusted with such a responsible mission as his campaign in the Yaman, it is difficult to believe that his son could be flourishing in 380/990, i.e. 120 years later. So far I have not been able to trace the full name of this Ja'far b. Manṣūr. It is quite possible that here *ibn* has the meaning of a "descendant", not *son*.

respect it is very interesting as one of the earliest controversies on the doctrine of the Imamat. The stories of Jesus and Muḥammad are very concise. Although I have not collated the works, it seems that the *Asrāru'n-nuṭaqā'* may possibly be an "answer" to Qāḍī Nu'mān's famous *Asāsu't-ta'wīl* (cf. *Guide*, no. 71), which deals with precisely the same matters, but without a clear controversial tendency.[1]

The next important "witness in the case", as far as I have been able to ascertain, is the brilliant Sayyid-nā Ḥamīdu'd-dīn Aḥmad b. 'Abdi'l-lāh al-Kirmānī, the chief *dā'ī* of "both the 'Irāqs", i.e. of W. Persia and Mesopotamia, who flourished towards the end of the fourth and in the beginning of the fifth/eleventh c., and died probably towards the end of the reign of al-Ḥākim (386–411/996–1021) whom he devoutly defends in many of his writings.

As a correction to the acount of his works given in the *Guide* (pp. 43–46) it may be mentioned that the most probable sequence of his main works was this: the *Rāḥatu'l-'aql* (no. 117), a bulky philosophical work, and one of the most fundamental in Ismaili esoteric literature, often quoted, paraphrased, etc., was apparently one of the earliest amongst his writings. Amongst his later works, all to a large extent controversial in spirit, are: *al-Maṣābīḥ fī ithbāti'l-Imāmat* (116), *Mabāsimu'l-mubāsharāt* (133), *al-Kāfiya* (135), and *Tanbīhu'l-hādī wa'l-mustahdī* (118), which is one of the latest of all. There is also *al-Ḥāwiya* (132). All these contain historical allusions, especially the *Kāfiya*, *Tanbīhu'l-hādī*, *Mabāsimu'l-mubāsharāt*, and *Maṣābīḥ*.

A Syrian *dā'ī*, Abū'l-Fawāris Aḥmad b. Ya'qūb, who wrote under al-Ḥākim, left an interesting treatise, *ar-Risāla fī'l-Imāmat*, divided into 16 questions (*Guide*, 148). It is preserved in the second volume of that most valuable chrestomathy, *Majmū'u't-tarbiyat*, of Sayyid-nā Muḥammad b. Ṭāhir al-Ḥārithī (d. 584/

[1] Although there is no doubt that this work was composed long after Qāḍī Nu'mān's death (in 363/974), there are no references to him in the *Asrāru'n-Nuṭaqā'*.

1188), cf. *Guide*, 195. Though it does not mention names, it obviously refers to the anti-Ismaili polemics.

Next in chronological order comes the strange *Ghāyatu'l--mawālīd*, ascribed to Sayyid-nā al-Khaṭṭāb (d. 533/1138; cf. *Guide*, 184). A quotation, from an incorrect copy, has been published by B. Lewis in his "Origins of Ismā'īlism", p. 109. The purpose of the work is to prove the genuineness of the Imamat of aṭ-Ṭayyib, the son of al-Āmir (495–524/1101–1130), the last Imam of the Musta'lian line, whose historical reality is highly questionable, and whose existence is a matter of faith. Many works in post-Fatimid Ismaili literature touch on this subject, and there would be nothing particular to notice about it, if it did not contain one most amazing statement, namely a revelation that al-Mahdī was not an Imam, and the father of al-Qā'im, and that there was a fourth concealed Imam, of whose existence apparently no other work knows anything, and who is to fill the vacant place. This is so extraordinary that it is worth while to examine the case in detail.

The work is divided into five *bābs*, each subdivided into *faṣls*: 1. *ithbātu'l-ḥujaj fī'l-jazā'ir al-ithnā-'ashar*; 2. *an-nāsūtu'l--muttaḥid bi'l-lāhūt*; 3. *hadhihi'l-ḥādithat wa ithbātu's-ṣaḥīḥ min-hā*, etc.; 4. *ithbātu'l-imāmat li'l-Imām aṭ-Ṭayyib*; and 5. *al-laṭā'if wa ghāyatu-hā wa'l-ḥujubu'l-khamsa wa ẓuhūru-hā bi-ḥudūdi-hā wa ẓuhūru'l-maqām bi-jam'i-hā wa tajallī al-Ghayb bi-hā*. It begins with the usual speculations about the necessity of guidance for the people which God, in His mercy, never refuses, always keeping in the "12 islands of the earth" His "proofs".[1] One

[1] The *ḥujjats* of the twelve *jazīras* are very often referred to in different esoteric works, whenever they touch on the rather frequently discussed subject of the *ḥudūdu'd-dīn*. But the names of these *jazā'ir* are never mentioned in this connection,—presumably because this is a matter of general knowledge. Such presumption, however, seems to be too optimistic: on enquiry from very many learned Ismailis, I was only able to elicit their confession that they have no knowledge of this, and even that they were unable to name the work in which I can find information. But at last, quite incidentally, I discovered this, in an esoteric treatise, *Risālatu'l-Basmala*, by Sayyid-nā 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn b. al-Walīd, the cousin of the fifth Yamanite *dā'ī*, who flourished towards the end of the

of such proofs, for the Yaman, is the petty local princess, al-Ḥurratu'l-Malika. There follows a lengthy discussion of the question whether a woman can be such a *hujjat*, or not, which is decided in the affirmative. Then follow esoteric speculations about the manifestation of Divine wisdom in man, about the question of the *satr* of Imām aṭ-Ṭayyib, and *satr* in general, about succession of Imams In the fourth *bāb* are discussed the questions of the genealogy of aṭ-Ṭayyib, and of his being a legitimate successor of his ancestors, and the belief that he is not dead. Ultimately the matter is again transferred to the sphere of abstract speculations, and of proofs by numerical values of letters, etc On the whole the question can be easily summed up in the author's own statement: such is our belief, and the belief of our ancestors.

The whole matter seems from beginning to the end to be extremely suspicious. We can visualize the situation. The assassination of al-Āmir took place in 524/1130,—the Musta'lians make it two years later, 526/1132 In this year, according to the tradition, the infant heir apparent, for some unknown reason, "disappeared" without leaving any trace. As Sayyid-nā al-Khaṭṭāb died in 533/1138, the treatise cannot have been written later than only nine years after this extraordinary event. Imagine

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sixth/twelfth c. (*Guide*, 192). It is included in that valuable chrestomathy, the *Majmū'u't-tarbiyat* (cf. *Guide*, 195). In this treatise there is a table, showing the theosophic scheme of the position of the Imam in the Universe. In this are included the titles of the twelve *hujjats*. I consulted three copies (all modern), but in one of them the table was omitted. The other two agreed completely, except that in one of these one name was missing It appears that in this sense *jazīra* does not mean the "island", as it usually means, but is taken here in its basic sense, from the root *j-z-r* = to cut off, and therefore means "a slice, cutting", or a part, a section. There fore the expression "12 *jazā'ir*" should be translated as the "12 sections of the world's population". They are: Arabs, Turks, Berbers, Negroes, Abyssinians, Khazars, China, Daylam (obviously for Persia in general), Rūm (= Byzantium and Europe in general), India (Hind = Eastern Afghanistan), Sind (= India in general), and Ṣaqāliba (Slavs,—often confounded with Sicily). Thus this classification is partly based on geo graphical, and partly on ethnographical principle, and plainly belongs to the fourth/tenth c (cf the names: Khazars, Daylam, Ṣaqāliba. Cf also further on). Expressions such as are found in the *Istitār*, e.g. the *jazīra* of Ḥarrān, of Syria, etc., obviously mean the province or district.

that the heir apparent of a first class power suddenly disappears without leaving any trace; but aṭ-Ṭayyib was for the Ismailis incomparably more important than any ordinary prince,—he was all in all for their religious life. Then we find that one of the religious leaders of the community, just a few years after the calamity, writing in a purely abstract and academic manner, basing his speculations on the vaguest and most abstract principles, confines himself, in short, to the bare assertion that we must believe him to be alive. Together with such discussions comes the statement that al-Mahdī was not an Imam, and that his place belongs to a mysterious *fourth* concealed Imam whom for some reason the Ismailis for over two hundred years had concealed with such extraordinary jealousy. It is impossible to ascertain without exhaustive study of Ismaili literature whether similar revelations are found in other works also. So far I have found traces of these only in the *Zahru'l-ma'ānī* of Sayyid-nā Idrīs. As may be seen from the translation of the original passage further on, he alludes to this theory clearly enough for those who have read the *Ghāyatu'l-mawālīd*, but not clearly enough to pin him to his word.

Learned Ismailis usually accept without any reservation the tradition which attributes certain works to different well-known authors, though in some cases it appears very suspicious. In this case the situation is the same. There are no indications as to the name of the author in the work itself. The reasons for which it is attributed to al-Khaṭṭāb are unknown. But it seems almost obvious that the work belongs to a much later period. Perhaps it was composed by Sayyid-nā Idrīs himself? Obviously under what may be in a way called the "pressure of public opinion", he boldly incorporates the myth of Ibn al-Qaddāḥ in his *Zahru'l-ma'ānī*. With his "diplomatic sense", he apparently arrives at the way of reasoning which comes to a compromise: since every one thinks that al-Mahdī was a descendant of al--Qaddāḥ, he must let it be so. But, nevertheless, he shall reveal the "truth", a great mystery: al-Mahdī was not the father of

the ancestor of aṭ-Ṭayyib, al-Qā'im. The latter's real father was a super-mysterious Imam 'Alī, who died on his way to the Maghrib, leaving his son al-Qā'im in charge of al-Mahdī.

All this is highly suspicious, and apparently no allusion to this is found in earlier sources. Strangely, the author of the *Fihristu'l-Majdū'*, so well informed, omits the *Ghāyatu'l-mawālīd* from his list, perhaps feeling certain doubts regarding it. I tried my best to ascertain from certain experts in Ismaili literature whether the work is quoted or referred to in any recognised esoteric treatises, but I was unable to elicit any definite information. This is not strange, because many esoteric authors rarely refer to their authorities by name. It would be necessary to read all the esoteric works in order to be certain. We shall return to these matters further on.

The next, chronologically, is the collection of the *Majālis*, i.e. lectures or discourses, of Sayyid-nā Ḥātim b. Ibrāhīm al-Ḥāmidī, who was the third Yamanite *dā'ī*, and died in 596/1199. Only nos. 77–133 of his lectures are in existence (*Guide*, 216). We are here only concerned with a portion of the 117th *majlis*, the supposed prophecy of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib himself, obviously compiled in the beginning of the fifth/eleventh c., in the reign either of aẓ-Ẓāhir (411–427/1021–1036), or al-Mustanṣir. It refers to the Imams not under their names, but under ***serial numbers***. This, as also the confusion of dates, is apparently a crude device to give verisimilitude to the "prophecy". Although of no particular importance, the extract seems worth quoting, because it contains interesting allusions, and reflects the spirit of probably influential circles (Texts, pp. 107–113).

The latest esoteric work of importance which should be quoted here, the *Zahru'l-ma'ānī* by Sayyid-nā Idrīs (*Guide*, 260), has been already referred to. It covers, as usual, the whole field of the subjects of esoteric theosophy, and in the 17th chapter gives a systematic review of the whole list of 21 Imams, describing their esoteric position, and explaining the religious character of their activity. An extract, covering the biographies of the Imams

from Ismā'īl b. Ja'far to al-Qā'im, is offered further on, with a complete translation (Texts, pp. 47–80).

With regard to the quotations and translations from the original works, offered here, several points may be noted. As a rule, there are practically no genuine variants in the Ismaili manuscripts preserved in the Bohora community in India. Most probably they have been copied from one single early copy brought from the Yaman; or, possibly, even in the Yaman itself, as a general rule, careful copying from a single original edition, and respect for the works themselves, safeguarded the copies from inexactitudes. If any differences between copies exist, they are almost invariably due to mistakes of the scribes, arising partly from imperfect knowledge of Arabic, and partly from illegibility of the original. In a great majority of cases they can be easily rectified. Therefore, in order not to burden the edition with often quite unnecessary notes, only the most important are here given in footnotes to the translation. Another reason for adopting this course is that except in very few cases all copies at my disposal were quite recent, and only there were one or two of each work. It should be therefore carefully noted that the editing of all texts in this volume is only *tentative*, and without any claim to finality and complete reliability.

As the present texts have an auxiliary character, and, I hope, may be in the future rendered unnecessary by complete editions of the whole works, I have not cared to expend time on scrutinizing every word in them. I shall be obliged to those who care to suggest emendations, wherever necessary.

With regard to translations it should be noted that I considered it inexpedient to lay down any rigid rule as to whether a translation of the extracts should be given in the text of the analysis, or in the separate section of translations. In order to economise space, I have thought it permissible not to edit original quotations from works which do not raise any doubts as to the meaning of the terms, such as extracts from the *'Uyūnu'l-akhbār*, or the first volume of *al-Azhār*. But those texts, which either

claim special importance, or may offer ground for doubt as to the implications of the original expressions, are given here in the original Arabic. All translations, both in the special section, and in the text of the analysis, are as literal as practicable. But certain portions, of secondary importance, are either briefly summarized, or simply omitted in translation. Such are the invocations of blessings after the names of the saints, except in cases where they present something out of the ordinary. Whole passages have been omitted when they contained statements which would be resented by other sects of Islam, and when they presented nothing of importance for the trend of the narrative. Also omitted are the boring and stereotyped excursions into Biblical parallels, when they are of no importance (except in the extract from the *Asrāru'n-nuṭaqā'*, in which they form the main part of the argument). On some occasions the extracts in original Arabic are edited, but left without a translation, because intended for reference only, as in the case of the *Ghāyatu'l-mawālīd*.

(In order to make it easier to follow the argument, I would recommend the readers, before proceeding further, to read my paper, "Ismailis and Qarmatians", in the JBBRAS, 1940, pp. 43–85, and pieces 1 and 2 in the Chapter VI further on.)

II. AL-MAHDI, HIS ANCESTORS AND FAMILY.

1. *The Genealogy of al-Mahdī, and his Family.*

Many students of the history of Ismailism have remarked the strange fact that the Fatimids, despite what may be called "very strong provocation", never made a public proclamation and official announcement of the genealogy which they claimed, and which was so much disputed. Their own version was apparently known only either through various renegades or other people for some reason closely connected with the sect, such as, e.g., Akhū Muḥsin, and others. It is referred to fragmentarily, and, as far as I know, there is no indication of its being incorporated in any official document, and refuted by their enemies *in toto*. The Abbasid proclamations of 402/1011 or 444/1052 are vague, and do not quote it. So strange a silence is taken (as by de Goeje, p. 6), as one of the proofs that their genealogy is not genuine. This idea is rather *naïve*: with the resources at their disposal the Fatimids could easily have had the most reliable genealogy prepared by the best specialists, and have bought the testimony of the greatest authorities, in case an official version, true or falsified, as the case might be, had really been required from their point of view. It may be safely presumed that such shrewd politicians and men of such brilliance generally as were the first Fatimid caliphs, realised perfectly well the dangers of the situation; there are many proofs that hostile propaganda, trying to compromise the Fatimids, striking at the root of their authority,— their Alid descent,— reached its destination, sometimes sowing grave doubts in the different Ismaili communities.[1] But notwithstanding all this, nothing was done, although there are traces in esoteric Ismaili works of

[1] The epistle of al-Mu'izz bi'l-lāh to his *dā'ī* in Sindh, quoted in the '*Uyūnu'l-akhbār*, sufficiently proves this. Cf. my paper "Ismailis and Qarmatians", JBBRAS, 1940, pp. 74-75.

the time, indicating that religious authorities were by no means blind to the consequences of such apparent inactivity.

It is remarkable that the names of the three concealed Imams, the links between al-Mahdī and the ancestor to whom he laid claim, Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl b. Ja'far, are not mentioned even in the Ismaili books of the time: Abū Ḥātim ar-Rāzī, Qāḍī an-Nu'mān, in his numerous works, Ja'far b. Manṣūri'l-Yaman, and other authors of the fourth/tenth c., never mention these names. The first, towards the end of this period, to break silence was the author of the *Istitār*, analysed above. And later on such references appear in the later works of Sayyid-nā Ḥamīdu'd-dīn al-Kirmānī, the great philosopher and high official, obviously in view of the great pressure of the hostile propaganda. They appear in his controversial works, apparently intended for perusal within the community.[1]

Thus we may safely infer that there was a very strong religious prejudice directed against "uncovering those whom God has veiled", or inspired by some similar idea. It was probably regarded as a great sin, and it was felt that any inconvenience should be endured rather than that such an offence should be committed. Such psychology is by no means strange in the Ismaili surroundings; it always persisted, and even now still persists in certain circles. To keep secret everything connected with their religion, however remotely, is one of the most important principles in Ismaili life. It is quite obvious that in the conditions of that remote time, and the heated atmosphere of religious fanaticism amongst the masses, such a precautionary measure was most stringently enforced. Most probably, this so got into the "blood" of the community, that even after the situation had changed, and the Fatimid power was able to secure the safety of its subjects, the taboo for a long time was not relaxed.

For this reason those who were for any reason interested in the descent of the Fatimids were left to their own ingenuity in

[1] See further on, p. 46 sq.

case they did not trust the version expressed by the Fatimids' own claims. The variety of genealogies suggested by various parties and historical writers must really constitute a record — these amount to several hundreds.[1] With their predominantly hostile tendency, each author vies with the others in inventing something more humiliating and scandalous for the dynasty. The most "effective" (and at the same time apparently the most absurd) version, according to which the Fatimids were descended from a certain heretic, 'Abdu'l-lāh b. Maymūn al-Qaddāḥ, has won general approval. It has become a sort of an "official and generally recognised" version in non-Ismaili circles, has been treated quite seriously, and even now evokes attempts at repair by ingenious theories. We are going to study it further, and it will suffice here only to mention that it has vitiated to a considerable extent a great deal of non-sectarian testimony which would otherwise be really valuable.[2]

We do not know whether there were any attempts in Ismaili literature to sum up available historical information about the ancestors of al-Mahdī before the *'Uyūnu'l-akhbār* of Sayyid-nā Idrīs. But by far the best and most succinct account is found in the first volume of the *Kitābu'l-azhār*, the chrestomathy by the eminent Indian Ismaili, Ḥasan b. Nūḥ of Broach, as mentioned above, in the chapter on sources. We may offer here a translation of the relevant portions, omitting superfluous details.

... "The *fifth* Imam was Mawlā-nā Ja'far b. Muḥammad, Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh, surnamed aṣ-Ṣādiq. The period of his Imamat was 34 years and seven months; he died in the month of Shawwāl 148/Nov.-Dec. 765, being 68 or 69 years old. He was buried in the Baqī' cemetery (in Medina), next to the graves of his father and grand-father, of Imam Ḥasan b. 'Alī, and Fāṭima, the daughter of the Prophet...

[1] The latest work on this subject is Prince P. Mamour's "Polemics on the Origin of the Fatimi Caliphs" (London, 1934).

[2] See further on, Chapter III.

The *sixth* Imam was Mawlā-nā Ismā'īl b. Ja'far, Abū Muḥammad, surnamed al-Wafī. He died during the lifetime of his father, but not before the latter had appointed him as his successor. (It is stated in history that his grave is in the Baqī· cemetery. I visited it in 904/1498-9; it was situated within the city walls, near the Baqī' gate). He bequeathed his position to his son, Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl, with the consent of his father, transferring to him the office of the Imamat by his father's, Imam Ja'far's order, and in his presence. Imam Ja'far communicated this only to the heads of the Shi'ite community, out of fear of exposing his heir to danger, in pursuance of the policy of concealment; thus only a few knew of this, those privileged ones who knew for certain that the designation of the Imam is irrevocable, and that the Imamat can be transferred only from one person to one, from the parent to the son.

The *seventh* Imam was Mawlā-nā Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl, Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh, surnamed ash-Shākir. He bequeathed his rank to his son 'Abdu'l-lāh b. Muḥammad... His grave was in a place called Farghāna (some say Naysābūr). It is narrated that the Imams of the period of *ẓuhūr* (i.e. the Fatimid caliphs) have removed the ashes of the concealed Imams to Cairo, but God alone knows whether this is true.[1]

Now comes the second heptade of the Imams, who are called *khulafā'*, or "successors".

The *first* of them is 'Abdu'l-lāh b. Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl b. Ja'far, Abū Muḥammad, surnamed ar-Raḍī, or, as some say, Nāṣir. He died in Salamiyya, and was buried there, but his ashes were afterwards transferred to Cairo.

[1] Cf. my "Ismailis and Qarmatians", JBBRAS, 1940, p. 63. In June 1937, while on a visit to Cairo, I did my best to discover traces of Fatimid tombs. With the help of Prof. Kamil Husain, of the Egyptian University, references in some mediæval works, dealing with the Qarafa, have been verified on the spot, and local inhabitants were questioned. But nothing could be elicited. It would be an interesting subject to collect references in mediæval authors to these graves, as also the tombs of the Fatimids in Mahdiyya. It is obvious that all of them have been destroyed since the fall of the dynasty.

The *second* of them was Aḥmad b. 'Abdi'l-lāh, Abū'l-Ḥusayn, surnamed at-Taqī, or, as some say, al-Khayr. He died in Salamiyya, but his ashes, as in the case of his father, were later on transferred to Cairo.

The *third* of them was Mawlā-nā Imām al-Ḥusayn b. Aḥmad, Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh, surnamed az-Zakī. He died in 'Askar Mukram (in Khūzistān), and his burial place was concealed.

The *fourth* of them was Mawlā-nā al-Imām 'Abdu'l-lāh b. al-Ḥusayn, Abū Muḥammad, surnamed al-Mahdī bi'l-lāh, Amīru'l-mu'minīn. He was the first of the Imams of the period of *ẓuhūr* (i.e. possession of secular authority), the dawn of the Light, the one who brought about the alleviation of the lot of the faithful. He was born in 'Askar Mukram in Khūzistān, on the night on Monday the 12th of Shawwāl 260/30-vii-874, or, as some say, 259/11-8-873 (if the day of the week mentioned here is true, the later date is perfectly correct,— the day really was a Sunday).

His father returned with him to Salamiyya, where he was brought up by his uncle Abū 'Alī al-Ḥakīm (i.e. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad ?), surnamed Sa'īdu'l-Khayr, in whose charge his father left him. It was this Sa'īdu'l-Khayr who sent the *dā'ī* Abū'l-Qāsim Ḥasan b. Faraḥ Ibn Ḥawshab, surnamed Manṣūr, to the Yaman. His father died when he was eight years of age.[1] His uncle Abū 'Alī al-Ḥakīm married him to his own daughter, and Abū'l-Qāsim al-Qā'im bi-amri'l-lāh was the issue of this marriage. Imam al-Ḥusayn b. Aḥmad (obviously Abū 'Alī al-Ḥakīm, who is really meant here) died a short time after the marriage. The duration of the Imamat of al-Mahdī, since the day on which he left Salamiyya to his death, was 38 years, five months, and three days.[2] Propaganda in his favour has spread everywhere, in the

[1] This is obviously based on the *Istitār*, 95, where it is said that al-Mahdī was at that time a child (*fī ḥāli'ṭ-ṭufūliyya*) and *Sīrat Ja'far al-ḥājib*, 109.

[2] This falls upon the 12-th of Ramaḍān 283/23-10-896. Al-Mahdī must certainly have left Salamiyya several years later, before the invasion of Syria by the sons of Zakrūya. Most probably in reality this date refers

Yaman and Maghrib, but nobody knew either his name or place of residence. He died in Mahdiyya on the night of Tuesday in the middle of Rab. I 322/4-3-934, being 61 years, five months and three days old. He was buried in Mahdiyya.

The *fifth* of them was Mawlā-nā al-Imām Muḥammad b. 'Abdi'l-lāh, Abū'l-Qāsim, surnamed al-Qā'im bi-amri'l-lāh, Amīru'l-mu'minīn. He succeeded his father at the age of 47, and his reign lasted 12 years, six months and 27 days. He died on the 14th Shawwāl 334/19-5-946, at the age of 59 years, six months and 27 days. He was buried in Mahdiyya."

It may be added that the same information is repeated in the first volume of *al-Azhār* in tabular form.

It is not necessary to take all these precise calculations of the age of al-Mahdī and al-Qā'im as quite reliable. In fact, it seems certain that al-Mahdī was born either in 259 or in 260 A.H., although some authors mention 266/879 (Ibn Khallikān, II, 77) as well, probably wrongly. But about the date of the birth of al-Qā'im there is greater discord: usually the date is given as 280/893, approximately, of course. The same Ibn Khallikān gives three alternative dates: 277/890, 280/893 and 282/895, and it seems that the last one is nearer to the truth. The statement that al-Qā'im succeeded his father, al-Mahdī, at the age of 47, implies his being born when al-Mahdī was only 15-16 years old, perhaps less. It is most probably taken from the fifth volume of the *'Uyūnu'l-akhbār*, and seems to be too early. Wüstenfeld (86) says that at the date of his death he was 55 years old, and this again means that he was born about 280/893.[1]

In my previous paper, "Ismailis and Qarmatians", JBBRAS, 1940, pp. 60–67, I have already given the contents of the passages, referring to Ismā'īl and Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl, found at the end of the fourth volume of the *'Uyūnu'l-akhbār* of Sayyid-nā Idrīs;

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to the death of his guardian, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad, as we may see further on.

[1] Cf. interesting references in the *Sīrat* of Ja'far where it is repeatedly mentioned that at the time of the emigration al-Qā'im still was a small child.

and we may here add what may be gathered about the three "concealed" Imams. Sayyid-nā Idrīs has derived his information, as may be seen, from the *Sharḥu'l-akhbār* of Qāḍī Nu'mān (very little, indeed), *Istitār*, the portion of the lost *Sīra* of Manṣūru'l-Yaman, quoted in the beginning of the *Iftitāḥu'd--da'wa*, and some other few sources which cannot be identified. His information is very meagre, and he makes up for this in the biography of Imam Aḥmad b. 'Abdi'l-lāh by inserting a lengthy account of the *Rasā'il Ikhwāni'ṣ-ṣafā*, which are supposed to have been composed by this Imam. Here is a translation of relevant passages:

"Then the Imamat went to Imam ar-Raḍī 'Abdu'l-lāh b. Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl, after his father's death. He returned to Nihāwand, where he married a daughter of Hamdān, son of (or son of the uncle of) Manṣūr b. Jawshan, who was from Kāzirūn. The issue of this marriage was a son, 'Alī b. 'Abdi'l-lāh, surnamed al-Layth, and a daughter, Fāṭima. The Imam's brothers also married, and had posterity.

When 'Abdu'l-lāh b. Muḥammad became the Imam, the Abbasids intensified their search for him everywhere. For this reason he left his son ('Alī ?) as his lieutenant, and himself went into concealment, so that none of his agents or ordinary followers knew his whereabouts. (Before leaving them) he instructed his *dā'īs* in the knowledge of the religion, his own and of his holy ancestors, and the *dā'īs* were strictly carrying out their instructions." (Here follows the story of the heresy of Aḥmad ibn al--Kayyāl, already translated and discussed in the previous paper, JBBRAS, pp. 64-5.) On p. 65 of the same paper a translation is also given of the passage, describing the further movements of the Imam: he again hides himself, this time in Daylam, accompanied by 32 trusted *dā'īs*. Here another son, Aḥmad, his successor in the future, is born, by an Alid wife whom he took at Ashnāsh. After this follows a lengthy story of al-Ma'mūn's strange plan of abdicating in favour of 'Alī ar-Riḍā, son of Mūsā al-Kāẓim, and the latter's death. On pp. 65–67 the reader will

find the details of the Imam's appointing as his deputy his own brother al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad, his being proclaimed an Imam, the tragic death of 'Alī al-Layth (the son or the brother ?), the journey of al-Ḥusayn to Khwārizm, to his brother Aḥmad, and the death of all members of the family, ambushed by enemies.

"When the Imam received news of all this, and of the misfortunes that befell his brothers and his son, he left Ahwāz, and went to Sāmarrā, where he stayed for a time, with his son Aḥmad. He wrote to his *dā'īs*, informing them that he was in safety. Then he travelled to Syria, disguised as a merchant. He ultimately settled in Salamiyya, where he built a house, still continuing to play his part of a merchant. There were living many Hashimites, some of whom were related to the Abbasids. So he pretended to be one of these, and was regarded as one of their number. He was respected for his great piety and virtue, which were the proofs of his high position. He kept in strict secret his own real name, and the name of his son.

His *dā'īs* have completely lost trace of him. Then they arranged a search, sending out their deputies to look for the Imam. Amongst these notable *dā'īs* were a certain Hurmuz, with his son Mahdī,[1] and Surḥāf b. Rustam,[2] with his son 'Imrān. This Mahdī had collected four thousand *dīnārs* in cash, from the donations of the faithful. He took the sum with him, and

[1] In my paper, "Ismailis and Qarmatians", p. 85, I have already raised the question as to this Mahdī b. Hurmuz being the father of Abū Zakariyā Yaḥyā b. al-Mahdī aṭ-Ṭamāmī or aṣ-Ṣamāmī, killed by Abū Sa'īd in Baḥrayn soon after 281/894. Dr. Lewis, in his work "The Origins of Ismā'īlism" (Cambridge, 1940), p. 78 sq., collects several forms in which this name is met with in historical reports, conjecturing that these imply one and the same person. May we go a step further, and suggest that this Mahdī was also the father of another prominent Ismaili *dā'ī*, Zakrūya b. *Mahdūya*, the father of the invaders of Syria? If this Mahdī was a young man in the beginning of the third/ninth c., Zakariyā, or Zakrūya, the father of the "Qarmatian" brothers, could have been his son. Such considerations are merely a guess, based on the indubitable tendency, noticeable in the history of early Ismailism, for high offices to become hereditary in certain privileged families.

[2] The strange name Surḥāf is apparently a later Yamanite Arabization of the original Persian Suhrāb, as is obviously suggested by the combination of the names: Suhrāb b. Rustam.

started on his tour in search of the Imam. He bought some cosmetics, hiding money in his wares, making inquiries about the Imam whose description he mentioned to the people. At last when he came to Salamiyya, he was directed to the house of his master. He asked the servants to be admitted in the presence of the Imam, explaining his being a *dā'ī*. Then he was admitted, and saw the Imam, to his great joy, and handed over to him the money which he had brought. Later on he returned to his country, and organised the *da'wat* there.[1]

The Imam remained in Salamiyya to the end of his life. He appointed as his successor his son Aḥmad b. 'Abdi'l-lāh b. Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl, and circulated his will to his *dā'īs*. Then he died, and was buried in Salamiyya.

After the death of his father, Aḥmad b. 'Abdi'l-lāh b. Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl became the Imam. He sent his *dā'īs* from Salamiyya to different provinces. His *dā'īs* rallied around him (*ittaṣala bi-hi*), preaching in his favour, but preserving the utmost secrecy as to his residence and his real name. He married, and had a son, al-Ḥusayn, who was his eldest son, and ultimately succeeded him after his death." Then the author proceeds with the story of Imam Aḥmad's compiling the Encyclopædia of *Ikhwānu'ṣ-ṣafā*, the purpose of which was to counteract the heretical and anti-Islamic innovations which began to spread with the connivance of al-Ma'mūn. A detailed account of the contents of all the 52 *risālas* is here given.[2]

[1] This story differs slightly from that of the *Istitār*, p. 93 sq. No Mahdī is mentioned there, although he may be referred to, in reality, under his *kunya*.

[2] Cf. *Guide*, 13–15. Ismaili tradition usually regards the "abbreviations" of this work, *ar-Risālatu'l-Jāmi'a* and *Jāmi'atu'l-Jāmi'a*, as *later* compositions of the author and of his son, al-Ḥusayn b. Aḥmad. Apparently there existed also other abbreviated versions. On perusal, these secret works, which are supposed to reveal deep mysteries, easily seem to contain nothing but a skeleton of the main work. It is therefore a tempting suggestion that one of these "abbreviations" may really be a very early original version, perhaps going as far back as the third/ninth c. (judging from the well-known archaism of the ideas in the *R. Ikhwāni'ṣ-ṣafā*). And perhaps the story of the "learned society", spontaneously founded for the compilation of such an encyclopaedia, may really contain a nucleus of truth in the fact that at a later time, in the fourth/tenth c., under the

The Imam then gave orders to distribute copies of the new Encyclopædia in mosques, for the guidance of the people. This was reported to al-Ma'mūn, who, not unnaturally, became very interested to find the source of this new form of propaganda. Follows the touching story of the devout and brilliant *dā'ī* who comes to al-Ma'mūn, participates in the disputes with theologians of different schools, comes out victorious, is asked to show the real Imam to whom the caliph swears to hand over the supreme authority, then ultimately confesses himself to be the Imam, and is beheaded. All this is taken from the 14th *juz'* of the *Sharḥu'l-akhbār*.[1]

The Imam died in Salamiyya, and was buried there. Now comes the section which is the most interesting for our inquiry.

"His son, al-Ḥusayn, surnamed az-Zakī, succeeded him as the Imam. He organised the propaganda, spread it further afield, broadcasted instruction to his followers (*baththa'l-'ulūm li-shī'ati-hi*), making it manifest (*aẓhara-hā*); he established proofs, explained the *risālas* (apparently the Encyclopædia of the *Ikhwānu'ṣ-ṣafā*),[2] and despatched his *dā'īs* everywhere. He thus made the true religion visible to those who were in search of it. His propaganda was spread widely by his *dā'īs*, proselytes became numerous, and different signs began to appear foretelling the advent of the Mahdī, and its near approach. The agents of the Imams promised relief to the people, under the law of Islam, and its injunctions.

The Abbasids intensified their search for him, but were unable to locate him. They apprehended undesirable consequences to themselves from his widely spreading propaganda,

Fatimids, a number of specialists, including even non-members of the sect, were engaged to compile detailed treatises on different subjects which formed parts of the whole work. The matter is still obscure, and requires thorough investigation. Perhaps this hypothesis may to some extent offer a more promising line of research.

[1] The account given in the *Asrāru'n-nuṭaqā'* of Ja'far b. Manṣūri'l-Yaman, in the extract translated further on, goes much further than these, almost admitting sincerity in the "conversion" of al-Ma'mūn.

[2] Cf. the note 2 on p. 35. Apparently his *Jāmi'atu'l-Jāmi'a* is here implicitly referred to.

watching the rising might of the movement. His *dā'īs* kept his name secret, avoiding to give any indication of his whereabouts, revealing this only to the most trusted followers. The time of the advent of al-Mahdī was approaching, and the Great Date was due.

The Imam al-Ḥusayn, desirous of promoting his propaganda, and organising his *dā'īs*, in furtherance of what God Himself wished in the way of the manifestation of His Light, travelled to Kūfa, on pilgrimage to the tombs of his ancestors, 'Alī and his son, Ḥusayn. Here he met with Abū'l-Qāsim b. al-Faraḥ Ibn Ḥawshab, later on the great *dā'ī*, the conqueror of the Yaman." (Follows an extract from the *Sīra* of this saint, preserved in the *Iftitāḥu'd-da'wa* of Qāḍī Nu'mān, and already edited by Quatremère, JA, 1836).

The Imam continued to live in Salamiyya, associating with the local Hashimites, and posing as one of them. Wealth of all kinds was coming to him from all sides from his *dā'īs*. (Follows an extract from the *Sīra* of Ja'far about the underground passage, and the mysterious hoarding cave, the local Sesame of the Arabian Nights.) The Imam kept on the best of terms with the local governors, giving them rich presents, so that they complied with all his demands. He kept an open table for the Hashimites and others.

"When the departure of Imam al-Ḥusayn approached, he entrusted his son, al-Mahdī, to his own brother, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad, surnamed Sa'īdu'l-Khayr, as guardian and as trustee of the Imamat which belonged to his son, al-Mahdī, at that time merely a child, who had to be put in charge of someone until his attainment of his majority. [I omit Biblical parallels, referred to here.] The trustee wished to keep the Imamat for his own son, depriving al-Mahdī of it. But every one amongst his sons, whom he made the Imam-designate, died, until no more sons remained to him.[1] Meantime God had given victory to Abū'l-

[1] This is taken from the *Istitār*, p. 95.

-Qāsim Ibn Ḥawshab in the Yaman, and he prepared the clothes (*thiyāb*,—covers for the Ka'ba ?), writing on these the name of al-Mahdī bi'l-lāh. This is what Imam al-Mustanṣir bi'l-lāh has revealed in his sermons about the story of his ancestor, al-Mahdī bi'l-lāh.[1]

The grave of Imam al-Ḥusayn was in 'Askar Mukram, because he travelled to that place not long before the rising of the "Qarmatians"; when their impious movement had arisen they occupied Syria. He left his place and his people secretly, because of the vigilance of the Abbasids, and went to 'Askar Mukram, where he died. His brother, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad, surnamed Sa'īdu'l-Khayr, died in Salamiyya, and was buried there. Thus the Imamat ultimately went to al-Mahdī."

It is interesting that the names and dates in the account given in the *Kitābu'l-azhār* sometimes do not coincide with those given by Sayyid-nā Idrīs. Therefore it seems there were also other sources, which were accessible to Ḥasan b. Nūḥ; and it would be interesting to know why they were not used by the author of the '*Uyūnu'l-akhbār*. In order to systematise the material, we may trace here the genealogical tree, beginning with Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl. Information about him and his descendants, as available in all these sources, raises many questions. Our sources are the '*Uyūnu'l-akhbār* (as in my paper, "Ismailis and Qarmatians", in the JBBRAS, 1940; for brevity we shall refer to it under "I.Q."); the *Sīra* ("S."); and the *Istitār* ("*Ist.*").

Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl had two sons who were apparently born to him before his migration to the East,—Ismā'īl and Ja'far. They seem to be quite historical (cf. '*Umdatu'ṭ-Ṭālib*, 209), left large posterity, are very rarely referred to in Ismaili works, and apparently played no part in sectarian life. It is impossible to ascertain whether "Ismā'īl (II)" who appears as

[1] It is not clear whether al-Mustanṣir refers here to the sins of Muḥammad b. Aḥmad in trying to usurp the office for his own sons, or only the reference to Ibn Ḥawshab belongs to him.

the successor of Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl in the Druze genealogy of the Fatimids, has anything to do with this Ismā'īl, or is a mere fiction.

In Persia one of his sons was 'Abdu'l-lāh, his successor as the Imam; he is apparently the same as 'Abdu'r-Raḥmān of the *Dastūru'l-munajjimīn* (de Goeje, 203). Tabari (III, 2218) is not certain about his historical reality; but the fact that he raises the question leaves it beyond doubt that already in the second half of the III/IXth c., i.e. about 100 years after the events, he was recognised as the successor of Imam Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl in sectarian circles (I.Q., 60–63).

Three other sons were: Aḥmad, al-Ḥusayn, and 'Alī "surnamed al-Layth", in full agreement with the *Dastūru'l-munajjimīn*.

'Alī al-Layth is apparently confounded with another 'Alī, who is said to be a son of 'Abdu'l-lāh. He was murdered by Abbasid emissaries (I.Q., 66). His son Aḥmad avenged his death (*ibid.*).

Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl (I.Q., 66) emigrated to Khwārizm. We do not know what happened to him.

Al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl was appointed to act on behalf of his (elder) brother, 'Abdu'l-lāh, travelled to Mekka in disguise, returned to Ahwāz, was proclaimed the Imam (I.Q., 65) by some *dā'īs*, against his will, as is stated, started for Khwārizm, to join his brother Aḥmad, was ambushed, and murdered with all his relatives (I.Q., 66). Only Aḥmad b. 'Alī al-Layth b. Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl remained.

'Abdu'l-lāh b. Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl travelled to Daylam (or Māzandarān), returned to Ahwāz (I.Q., 67), went thence to Mesopotamia, Sāmarrā, and ultimately settled in Salamiyya. He had two sons, Aḥmad and Ibrāhīm (*Ist.*, 95).

About Ibrāhīm b. 'Abdi'l-lāh b. Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl nothing is known (even his name is not mentioned anywhere except for the *Istitār*), save the fact that his posterity was still living at the time of al-Mahdī (cf. *Ist.*, 97,—*awlād* Ibrāhīm).

They were apparently slaughtered later on in Salamiyya by the "Qarmatians", in 291/903.

Aḥmad b. 'Abdi'l-lāh b. Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl succeeded his father, and is supposed to be the author, or, to use a more up-to-date term, "chief editor" of the Encyclopædia of *Ikhwānu'ṣ-ṣafā*. He lived in Salamiyya, and had two sons, al-Ḥusayn, his successor, and Muḥammad, surnamed Sa'īdu'l-Khayr (*Ist.*, 95). As seen above, in the *Kitābu'l-Azhār*, Aḥmad b. 'Abdi'l-lāh is endowed with the surname al-Khayr, and his son Muḥammad is also called Abū 'Alī al-Ḥakīm. All this obviously may be true: there is nothing improbable in the fact that a person should have been called Abū 'Alī Muḥammad b. Aḥmad, surnamed Sa'īd, and also Sa'īdu'l-Khayr (Sa'īd, son of al-Khayr ?), and at the same time also al-Ḥakīm, as a tribute to his learning, or something on the same lines. It is a great pity that the author of *al-Azhār* does not mention the source from which he has taken this,— perhaps this would put us on the track of something useful. As mentioned in the same *al-Azhār*, al-Mahdī was married to this person's daughter, the mother of al-Qā'im. His posterity were living in Salamiyya, and probably perished at the hands of the "Qarmatians" with other members of the house in 291/903 (*Ist.*, 97). He himself died soon after al-Mahdī's wedding,— we will see this presently in detail.

Ḥusayn b. Aḥmad b. 'Abdi'l-lāh b. Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl, the father of al-Mahdī, is apparently the same "Ḥusayn" who figures in the well-known story of the conversion of Ibn Ḥawshab, later on the Manṣūru'l-Yaman, although this is not as certain as could be desired. There is apparently much confusion both in the '*Uyūn* and the *Azhār*, of which it seems easy to trace the cause: both derive their information from the *Istitār* and the *Sīra* of Ja'far, and in these, for some reason, references are very ambiguous: "*al-Imām*", who is referred to on such occasions, is not named, and from the context it is by no means easy to see who is meant in every particular case, whether

Aḥmad b. 'Abdi'l-lāh, his son Ḥusayn b. Aḥmad, or the "acting" Imam, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad, or, lastly, al-Mahdī himself.[1]

As we have seen above, it is clearly stated in the *Azhār* that Ḥusayn b. Aḥmad died when al-Mahdī, his son, was eight years old. As the latter was born about 260/874, the date of his death must be *ca.* 268/881-2. Tabari, as is known, refers to al-Mahdī under the name of Ibn al-Baṣrī,—"the son of the Baṣran", and the Ismaili sources completely agree in this, emphasising the connection of the Imams, and especially of this Ḥusayn b. Aḥmad, with Southern Mesopotamia and the adjoining province of Khūzistān. It is stated that al-Mahdī was born in 'Askar Mukram, in the latter province, and that Ḥusayn also died and was buried there. We can easily believe this: apparently in the second half of the third/ninth c. it became ever clearer that the centre of gravity of Ismaili power was shifting towards the South East: Southern Mesopotamia, Khūzistān, Fārs, and the Yaman, which was best reached by sea from such places as Baṣra. It is therefore not difficult to believe that

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[1] On pp. 108 and 109 apparently "al-Imām", whom Ja'far could remember, was Muḥammad b. Aḥmad. On p. 115 "al-Imām" apparently is al-Ḥusayn, as he is mentioned in connection with the mission of Ibn Ḥawshab to the Yaman; Fīrūz, the chief *dā'ī*, who later on rebelled against al-Mahdī, was the instrument by whom Ibn Ḥawshab was brought into touch with the "Imām". But it may be also that as al-Ḥusayn died soon after the first meeting, the mission was organised by Muḥammad. Lower on p. 115, and further on, "al-Imām" plainly refers to al-Mahdī. On p. 122, giving details about the career of Abū'l-'Abbās, the older brother of Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh ash-Shī'ī, he again refers obviously to Muḥammad b. Aḥmad: "and he saw al-Imām *and* al-Mahdī, with al-Qā'im with both of them. He (al-Qā'im) was at that time still a small child". Further on "al-Imām" again plainly refers to al-Mahdī. As the whole *Sīra* clearly shows, Ja'far never refers to religious matters, in which he obviously regarded himself as not competent. Although he was a devout slave, it seems to be not quite certain whether he himself was an Ismaili. As one can see from his *Sīra*, many of al-Mahdī's intimate servants were Christians (p. 108). Many rose to high position. Therefore there would be nothing strange in Ja'far's not being really an Ismaili. Perhaps this circumstance may explain the fact of the compilation of his *Sīra*, as a "reply" to the boastful *Sīra* of Jawdhar. Ja'far's unspoken idea may have been that though not himself an Ismaili, or at least not of a high rank in the Ismaili hierarchy, yet he had performed for his masters all the services which he records. If we assume this, it would be quite easy to understand the way in which he avoids dwelling on purely Ismaili matters.

the head of the sect in fact settled in some centre in one of those localities, leaving his son and heir, with other members of the family, in charge of his younger brother, in a comparatively safer place such as the remote Salamiyya, where few would be likely to connect a wealthy merchant family residing in their midst with the growing unrest and activities in the remote South. The *'Uyūn*, however, offers a puzzling piece of information when it states that Imam Ḥusayn lived until al-Mahdī was married, and died soon after this in 'Askar Mukram whither he had gone in haste on hearing of the rise of the "Qarmatians", who later on have invaded Syria. To me it seems clear that this is entirely due to a confusion created by the wrong identification of "al-Imām" in the *Istitār*. If Ḥusayn died soon after the marriage of al-Mahdī, and this took place about the time of the invasion of the "Qarmatians", i.e. 290/903, there are many absurdities in the situation. Al-Mahdī was then about thirty years old,— surely rather an advanced age for his (first) marriage. If "the Imam" suddenly left Salamiyya, why did he flee not away from the "Qarmatians", but towards the very territory from which they had started? How could he leave "an infant son" in the charge of his brother, when this infant was thirty years of age? We must therefore surmise that Ḥusayn in fact died when al-Mahdī was a child (*Istitār*, 95). "The Imam" who died soon after the marriage of al-Mahdī obviously was his uncle and guardian, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad (*Sīra*, 109), and "the Imam" who fled from Salamiyya at the approach of the "Qarmatians" must certainly have been al-Mahdī himself.

It is stated in the *Istitār* (95) that the guardian, Muḥammad surnamed Sa'īdu'l-Khayr, the "acting Imam", tried to usurp the Imamat for his own line, appointing one after another his sons successively as his heir, but that all of these died, so that ultimately the Imamat, by the will of God, returned to him for whom it was destined, i.e. al-Mahdī. Similar stories are

found in other periods of Ismailism.[1] It is more probable that in reality Muḥammad b. Aḥmad succeeded his brother as the Imam on the death of al-Ḥusayn, and that later on he did in fact appoint one or more of his sons as his prospective heir. On the death of Muḥammad's sons, however, and on subsequent death of Muḥammad himself, al-Mahdī, the son of his brother Ḥusayn, found himself the eldest of the family, and was recognised as the Imam, as is explained further on.

The absence of detailed biographies of the ancestors of al-Mahdī is explained by the Ismaili sources as the result of their having lived in strict disguise. This seems quite probable, if we realise the situation. What in fact would the popular memory preserve about the religious heads of the sect when these were living ostensibly as merchants, carrying on their business, associating with their friends, marrying, educating their probably numerous children, and so on? The memory of religious tradition is very economical: it retains only reminiscences of the most important names and events. What really constituted the most important part of the activities of the Imams,— their propaganda efforts, was without any doubt carried on in the utmost secrecy, "between four eyes". Similarly, their agents, also disguised as pious merchants of slightly lower standing, and, perhaps, in isolated cases secretly composing their books in addition to their cautious and quiet propaganda, left little to be remembered of them in the way of "sensational events". Not all of them were outstanding men of the talents of Ibn Ḥawshab or Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh ash-Shī'ī. Further, since the leaving of any trace of their activities in writing was obviously avoided as much as possible, it is certain that very little could really have been preserved in the records and memory of succeeding generations. Thus the long "blank" period in

[1] As an instance may be mentioned the tradition regarding the similar situation which arose after the death of *pīr* Ḥasan Kabīru'd-dīn, the father of Imām-Shāh, the founder of the Satpanthī sect in Gujrat, towards the end of the ninth/fifteenth c.

the story of the Imams, living in such conditions, cannot reasonably be taken as valid proof of the falsity of their claims to continuous succession from their original ancestor, Ismā'īl b. Ja'far. We do not know how, and by what proofs they used to convince their followers as to the genuineness of their claims. But our ignorance does not constitute a "legal proof" of the futility of their case. It seems that it would be far more suspicious if they had had a consistent and clear-cut story, prepared to satisfy the legitimate curiosity of their followers and of outsiders.

It is possible to collect some very interesting information about the family of al-Mahdī from different allusions, scattered in the *Istitār* and the *Sīra*: he had a brother, Abū Muḥammad, apparently younger than himself, who had some posterity (*Ist.*, 95, 102). He fell ill, and died on the day Abū Mahzūl, i.e. Ṣāḥibu'sh-shāma, the "Qarmatian", invaded Salamiyya (*Ist.*, 100), i.e. in the middle of 290/903. "Sons of al-Mahdī's uncle" are referred to in *Ist.*, 97.

A very interesting, but entirely obscure reference is found in *Ist.*, 102, in which it is stated that the same Abū Mahzūl, writing secretly to al-Mahdī, referred to "his cousin (*ibn 'amm*) with his son" being deported, or exiled (*daf'*) to 'Irāq (Western Persia or Mesopotamia ?). Cf. also Texts, p. 108.

Some interesting allusions are found in the *Sīra* of Ja'far *al-ḥājib*. As it should be in a work ascribed to an intimate servant of the family of al-Mahdī, matters are here touched upon about which we should scarcely find information elsewhere, namely questions concerning his women-folk. On p. 108 Ja'far remembers the circumstances of al-Mahdī's marriage to his cousin, and plainly says that she later on became the *mother* of al-Qā'im. On p. 110 it appears that at the time of his emigration from Salamiyya his own mother (i.e. the widow of al-Ḥusayn) was still living, and that he had two daughters. His family also included two nieces, daughters of his brother, and Umm Ḥabīb, *the wife of al-Qā'im.* This is extremely interest-

ing. Was she the *future* wife of al-Qā'im (married to him later), or was he married already at that time? As we may see, on p. 111 of the *Sīra*, al-Qā'im during the flight to Egypt is remembered by the old servant as a small child, crying when displeased. In the *Istitār*, 95, he also appears as a child, as we have seen. Which is true? Was he a small child, or a married youth? If he really was 47 at the time of al-Mahdī's death, in 322/934, he would then have been 13 at the time of the emigration, in 288/901. But it is more likely that he was born about 280/893, as shown above, p. 32.

It may be added that in addition to al-Qā'im, the *Istitār* mentions another son of al-Mahdī, still a child, by a concubine, who figures in the story of the "Qarmatian" slaughter of his relatives. From non-Ismaili sources it is also known that later on he had many other sons: Abū 'Alī Aḥmad (d. 382/992); Abū Ṭālib Mūsā; Abū'l-Ḥusayn 'Īsā (d. 382/992); Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh al-Ḥusayn (d. *ca.* 336/948); and Abū Sulaymān Dā'ūd (d. 341/952). Cf. E. de Zambaur, "Manuel de généalogie et de chronologie", p. 95. For some reason these sons are never mentioned in Ismaili works.

2. *Doubts raised by Esoteric and other Sources.*

So far the Fatimid version seems to be surprisingly simple and consistent, and such as to inspire a considerable amount of confidence in so far as it not seldom finds support in the allusions scattered in non-Ismaili sources. I do not speak of such as Akhū Muḥsin, whose information is obviously derived from the Ismaili tradition, but is deliberately vitiated in details. The confusion and inaccuracies noted above constitute a very valuable proof of the antiquity and preservation of this tradition: it is clear that the authors of the works in which it is preserved, did not interfere with it. They simply copied the sources at their disposal, paying no regard to the inconsistency of different reports.

There are, however, certain points of doubt as to whether the picture is in fact so altogether flawless. A strange, though perhaps definitely erroneous variation is found in the names of the three concealed Imams in the fourth part of the *Kitābu'l-Azhār* of Ḥasan b. Nūḥ of Broach. At its beginning he quotes the well-known esoteric work of Ḥamīdu'd-dīn al-Kirmānī, the *Tanbīhu'l-hādī wa'l-mustahdī* (cf. *Guide*, No. 118), which appears to be one of his latest compositions, and so written just about the beginning of the fifth/eleventh c. The quotation is from the 26-th *bāb*: *fi't-tanbīh li-amr man yujib ukhdhu'd-dīn min-hu wa'ftirāḍ ṭā'ati-hi'l-ladhī huwa Waliyyu'l-lāh fī arḍi-hi.* The author refers to the Imam of the time, al-Ḥākim *bi-amri'l-lāh,* tracing his genealogy to 'Alī, in the course of which, between al-Mahdī and Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl, he mentions three names of the concealed Imams: 1. 'Abdu'l-lāh (as usual); 2. Muḥammad (instead of the usual Aḥmad); and 3. Aḥmad (instead of the usual Ḥusayn). I have compared two copies of this volume of *al-Azhār*,— unfortunately not old,— and found that both these completely coincide in this passage. On collating it with two (also modern) copies of the original work, *Tanbīhu'l-hādī*, I found that the passage coincides in everything, except in the names of these three Imams, which are given in their usual form: 'Abdu'l-lāh, Aḥmad, Ḥusayn. Which version is to be trusted? Is this an ordinary mistake in the *K. al-Azhār*, which crept in at an early date, and was later on blindly repeated in all subsequent copies? Or may this be the original version, which the shrewd Bohora, Ḥasan b. Nūḥ, found in an old copy of the *Tanbīhu'l-hādī*? In such a case we must admit that at the end of the fourth/tenth c. the Fatimid tradition regarded Imam Aḥmad (the author of the *Rasā'il* of *Ikhwānu'ṣ-ṣafā*) as the father, not the grand-father of al-Mahdī, and his father as Muḥammad b. 'Abdi'l-lāh.[1] Against this we have the testimony

[1] It is interesting to note that in some non-Ismaili sources such as the mystic works of the Druzes, al-Mahdī appears to be the son of Abū Shalaghlagh Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. 'Abdi'l-lāh (cf. de Goeje, p. 21).

of the *Istitār*, which we can hardly believe to be "revised and corrected" in this respect, and, to some extent, a still earlier source, the well-known quotation from the *Sīra* of Manṣūru'l-Yaman incorporated in the *Iftitāḥ* and the *Sharḥu'l-akhbār*, in which his conversion is attributed to *Ḥusayn* (assuming this Ḥusayn to be the same as the Imam Ḥusayn, the father of al-Mahdī). In any case, there is apparently, so far as I have been able to ascertain, no other work in which these names are mentioned in this form. Tabari, III, 2232 sqq., quotes epistles, sent by the "Qarmatian" leader, apparently on behalf of al-Mahdī. Unfortunately, the text is very uncertain here, and it is not easy to see what the reading should be, whether "from 'Abdu'l-lāh (b. ?) Aḥmad b. 'Abdi'l-lāh", or "from the *slave of God* (*'abdi'l-lāh*) Aḥmad b. 'Abdi'l-lāh", or simply *"from* (*min 'indi*, as in the footnote *h*) Aḥmad", etc. The name is often regarded as the "regnal name" which was assumed by Yaḥyā b. Zakrūya, the "Qarmatian", who "proclaimed himself the Imam". This seems to be very doubtful, and most probably, if the whole matter is to be taken seriously, and is not a falsification (which is also very likely), the document must be regarded as a letter written in the name of al-Mahdī. Thus he could either be called 'Abdu'l-lāh, or Aḥmad, and his father's name could be either Aḥmad, or 'Abdu'l-lāh. All this of course inspires very grave doubts.

Quite a different question is raised by the indisputable historical facts of a series of defections on the part of the leading *dā'īs* under al-Mahdī, which perhaps to some extent may have a connection with doubts in his official genealogy. The "apostasy" of Ḥamdān Qarmaṭ and 'Abdān seems to be the first in this chain. The next, within a few years, is the disillusionment of the "Qarmatian" brothers, which they, quick to pass from words to acts, expressed in the terrible slaughter of al-Mahdī's family in Salamiyya, in 291/903. In a few years again, perhaps in quick succession, the chief *dā'ī* Fīrūz deserts al-Mahdī, flees to the Yaman, and there starts a rebellion; and, at the top of

al-Mahdī's remarkable successes, the man who has brought him on the throne, Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh ash-Shī'ī, revolts against him. These moreover are only the cases which are known.

Formerly only the first and the last cases were known, but already de Goeje had tried to connect the apostasy of Qarmaṭ with the revolt of Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh ash-Shī'ī (*Mémoire*, p. 67). It seems worth while to examine these cases more thoroughly. The story of the apostasy of Ḥamdān Qarmaṭ is narrated by Nuwayrī, an author who apparently had at his disposal some Ismaili sources, but who, out of enmity, or for some other reasons, quite impudently perverted facts in his own writings. The events according to him were as follows (de Goeje, *Mém.*, 58; de Sacy, *Exposé*, Intr., 193 sq.): Qarmaṭ, with his secretary 'Abdān, was staying at Kalwādhā, near Baghdad, keeping in touch with the headquarters in Salamiyya. When the head of the sect died (Muḥammad b. Aḥmad, *ca.* 283/896 ?), his *son* (?) and successor (al-Mahdī ?) wrote to him a letter in which he found "some unusual expressions, deviating from the established custom, and indicating some important change". To clear his doubts he sent his trusted secretary 'Abdān to Salamiyya. The latter, in an interview with the *son* of the deceased head of the sect, was informed that he (al-Mahdī ?) was not a descendant of 'Aqil b. Abī Ṭālib (for whom obviously he was giving himself out in Salamiyya for the sake of disguise), but of 'Abdu'l-lāh b. Maymūn b. Dayṣān, who had nothing to do with Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl. The preaching in favour of the latter was nothing but a trick to dupe people, etc. 'Abdān returns, reports to Ḥamdān Qarmaṭ, the latter assembles his *dā'is*, reveals to them the news, and suspends the propaganda. "One of the *sons* of 'Abdu'l-lāh b. Maymūn", who usually resided in Ṭāliqān (in Persia, East of Alamūt, familiar to students of Ismailism), passing through the Sawād of Kūfa, failed to find Qarmaṭ, who absconded; he meets 'Abdān, apparently tries to win him back, but fails, and, with the help of Zakrūya, gets rid of him. These events took place during the years 286/899 and 287/900 (de Sacy, Intr., 200).

All this, with lively dialogues, and surprisingly intimate knowledge not only of the minutest details of what happened, but also of the deepest thoughts and intentions of the participants, can be nothing but one of the numerous improvisations of Nuwayrī, whose primary purpose was to provide entertaining reading, and who cared less than anything for the truth. But the basis of this story, namely a radical change in the policy of the Salamiyya headquarters, which caused a split in the sect and opposition on the part of Ḥamdān, probably contains some grains of truth.

What such extraordinary changes could have been, is difficult to guess. It seems obvious that the phrase "preaching in favour of Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl", who died about a century earlier, is probably a mistake, and should be understood as "preaching in favour of a *descendant*" of the saint. The mention in the same story of the statement of the successor of the defunct head of the sect that he had nothing to do with this Imam, clearly suggests such a correction. It is quite probable, although there is no documentary proof, that there was such a sect, perhaps the "Qarmatians of Baḥrayn" (and obviously of Southern Persia), who really expected the "return" of Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl. We do not know for certain whether Ḥamdān Qarmaṭ had anything to do with them. But it would be extremely difficult to believe that the heads of the incipient Ismaili movement would have been content with the rôle of chief *dā'īs*, and only at the last moment would have revealed to one of the most trusted *dā'īs* their real position. The split could have been caused by some irregularity in succession, either that of al-Mahdī instead of one of the sons of Muḥammad b. Aḥmad, or that of al-Mahdī instead of his own (elder?) brother, Abū Muḥammad. We must also recall the fact that Shi'ism was a living religion, the supply of the Alid candidates was plentiful, and although there were all kinds of sects of the *wāqifa* type, they were apparently not very popular.

The most important consideration is that although Ḥamdān Qarmaṭ rebelled, or even seceded, together with a certain following, the heads of the sect, nevertheless, commanded the recognition of the great majority. The masses at that particular period could hardly have been moved to such an extent as we see in the rise of the Fatimids simply by vague and mystic promises. The story of the adventures of Ibn Ḥawshab, supposed to be narrated by himself in the lost *Sīra* (cf. *Iftitāḥ*, *Sharḥu'l-akhbār*), clearly shows the "thirst" of the masses for a definite candidate, not a "symbol". Therefore there may be serious reasons to think that the stress in the narrative of these events is laid on the claims to Mahdī-ism.

Sayyid-nā Idrīs, implicitly following the *Ghāyatu'l-mawālīd* in his *Zahru'l-ma'ānī* (as may be seen from the extract edited here in the original Arabic, and translated further on), gives us to understand that the religious position of al-Mahdī was somewhat inferior to that of his son and successor, al-Qā'im. We can see that apparently al-Mahdī himself did nothing to bring himself more into tune with the numerous prophecies current among the masses, while everything in this respect was done to cause al-Qā'im to come up to expectations. One of the earliest prophecies, which apparently already existed by the end of the first/seventh c.,[1] promised that the name of the Mahdī should be exactly the same as that of the Prophet himself. In non-Ismaili sources it is reported that the original name of al--Qā'im was 'Abdu'r-Raḥmān [2], but it was subsequently changed into Abū'l-Qāsim Muḥammad, the name of the Prophet. Similarly, in esoteric sources stress is laid on his being the *twelfth* in descent from 'Alī, in accordance with another Shi'ite prophecy.[3] His regnal name, *al-Qā'im*, is the Shi'ite equivalent for the all-Islamic *Mahdī*. A trivial, but noteworthy detail is that in the story of an alleged miracle of al-Mahdī, narrated in the *Sīra*

[1] Cf. my article "Early Shi'ite Movements", JBBRAS, 1941, p. 8.
[2] Cf. Wüstenfeld, "Fatimiden-Chalifen", p. 70.
[3] See the tradition no. 43 in the extract from the *Sharḥu'l-akhbār*.

of Ja'far (120), the miracle is really worked by al-Qā'im, who supernaturally produces water in a dried up stream, according to an old local prophecy concerning the advent of the expected Mahdī.

In esoteric and extremist speculations, such as those of the Druzes, the position of al-Qā'im is incomparably greater than that of al-Mahdī. We may feel strong suspicions that in these speculations dating from long after the death of al-Mahdī the principal part was played only by superstitious ideas, which had no connection with the facts. And it is highly probable that the same superstitious ideas may, in a different way, have been dangerous to his cause, because they forced him to pass the test of miracle-working, as is often narrated in non-Ismaili historical works. Disillusionment in this respect was obviously a very powerful source of opposition.

The strongest proof of the fact that the danger was quite serious, and that measures were devised to meet it, is found in a fact which has hitherto remained unknown. As may be seen from the chapter dealing with prophecies concerning the advent of the Mahdī, Qāḍī Nu'mān (obviously in his capacity as official speaker for the early Fatimids in matters of religious policy) systematically adheres to the idea that Mahdī-ism is the same thing as the Imamat (in Ismaili sense). According to his theory, the Mahdī is a kind of a collective name, applicable to a dynasty of the Imams (*al-A'immatu'l-mahdiyyūn*): whatever has not been done by any one member of the dynasty in fulfilment of the prophecies, will be done by his descendants. There is hardly any room for misunderstanding of the implications of the theory, and the reasons of the policy. It was an attempt to find a suitable pretext to postpone "payment of the cheques" by transferring the liability from the founder of the dynasty to his successors.

It may be noted that the term Mahdī is used in Ismaili literature as merely a name. Its Ismaili equivalent, the Qā'im, i.e. the "One who ariseth (at the Last Day, i.e. in the last phase

of the "old order", to uphold the purity of religion"), has vast implications, both of a religious and secular nature which obviously would not fit the historical al-Mahdī. Though undoubtedly a man of a brilliant intellect, extraordinary personality, and organising talent, he appears, nevertheless, in all reports about him as a remarkably secular figure, entirely devoid of any mystic nimbus, or any aspiration to the rank of a great religious teacher of humanity.

With all this in mind we may perhaps be able to penetrate the causes of the defection of different *dā'īs*. It is quite possible that both Ḥamdān and Fīrūz, experienced and intelligent men, realised quite well the risk connected with such extraordinary claims. Perhaps finding a pretext in some irregularities of the succession, they tried to dissociate themselves from al-Mahdī, while carrying on their mission along lines which they regarded more profitable. As is known, Ismaili sources do not mention Ḥamdān at all (probably because he became a renegade and rebel). The case of Fīrūz is narrated with slight differences in details in the *Sīra* of Ja'far, and in the *Iftitāḥu'd-da'wa*. The latter, as we have seen, is particularly reliable, because it is based on reports of contemporaries. The extract relating to this matter is translated further on, and is edited in the original Arabic. It is not clear whether Fīrūz rebelled because al-Mahdī wanted to move to the Maghrib, as narrated in the *Sīra* (113–115), or al-Mahdī had to give up the idea of going to the Yaman because Fīrūz preceded him there, as is stated in the *Iftitāḥ*. In any case the reasons of the rebellion of Fīrūz were obviously more serious than the fear of certain discomfort connected with the journey. Most probably the choice was between the quiet and certain position of an ordinary Imam in the Yaman, and of the ambitious programme of the Mahdī, "the sun rising from the West".

The reason for the disillusionment of the Qarmatian brothers, and their wild Bedouins, is quite obvious — their own defeat, for which they, regarding themselves as al-Mahdī's army, laid

the blame on him. The army of the Mahdī cannot be defeated. But they suffered a defeat. Therefore, their master was not the Mahdī. It is highly probable that the story in the *Istitār* of their having slaughtered the relatives of al-Mahdī and pillaged his house only at the last moment, when everything seemed lost, is quite true.[1]

The reasons for the rebellion of Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh ash-Shī'ī are more difficult to trace, unless we admit that the realisation of his failure to make al-Mahdī merely a puppet in his hands played an important part. The hints that he had discovered that al-Mahdī was not an Imam, but an ordinary *dā'ī*, are highly improbable. It is more likely that he suffered some disappointment in regard to the Mahdī-ism of his master. If al-Mahdī was really nothing but a temporary Imam-guardian, in charge of the real Imam, al-Qā'im, who was a minor, not more than 17 years of age, there would be nothing extraordinary on the part of al-Mahdī; at least his right to the rank would have been equal to that of Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh himself. The official appointment of al-Qā'im as heir apparent almost immediately after the execution of the rebels may look suspicious. But it could easily have been dictated also by quite natural fears of another plot, which, if successful, would have undone much of what had been achieved so far with so much sacrifice and labour. In any case, complete accord appears to reign through all the relations between al-Mahdī and al-Qā'im. Although, as we have seen, cf. p. 45, al-Mahdī had many sons, of which there is no doubt, he never attempted to appoint one of them as his successor, and they never played any important part. Only after his death a certain "Ibn Ṭālūt al-Qurashī" rose in Tripoli, claiming autho-

[1] It might appear as if the slaughtering of al-Mahdī's family was a kind of revenge for his "desertion", and his failure to take his place at the head of the forces that were fighting for him. But this would be an illusion. In fact, it was not so. His conduct was apparently regarded as quite natural: al-Mahdī similarly took no part in Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh ash-Shī'ī's campaigns, and in general never commanded an army in the field. The same was the case with the Abbasids when Abū Muslim was fighting for them, and with many earlier Alid insurgents.

rity for himself because he was a son of al-Mahdī. But he is stated to have been a pretender. It would be difficult to regard him as such in case he was a real prince. Surely, all sons of al-Mahdī were well known to everybody.

To sum up, the doubts as to the genuineness of the rights of al-Mahdī, which are derived from this survey of the known facts regarding the defection of his closest collaborators, point more to their disagreement with his ambitious assumption of the part of the expected Mahdī rather than to any doubts that he was not the Imam, or the father of al-Qā'im.

In my paper "Ismailis and Qarmatians" (JBBRAS, 1940, pp. 73-74) I have already touched on the question of the theories of Dr. B. Lewis, in his work mentioned above, concerning the two varieties of Imams, the *mustaqarr*, or real, and the *mustawdaʻ*, or acting, that is to say, acting during the minority of a real Imam, when the latter succeeded his father. His "reconstruction" of the genealogy of al-Qā'im (p. 72 of his book), is based on several misunderstandings,—firstly, on a mistake in his copy of the *Ghāyatu'l-mawālīd*, secondly, on the acceptance of the fantastic (or mystic) theories of the Druzes, and, thirdly, on the introduction of beliefs which only developed much later on. His "reconstruction" of the genealogy of al-Qā'im is quite improbable: Muḥammad b. Ismāʻīl was almost certainly born about 120/738, and al-Qā'im, the fifth generation, died in 334/946. This makes five generations for 214 years, or 43 years per generation, while in the case of the historical Fatimids it is only 23. Thus it is obviously unacceptable.

From a great mass of indirect indications, scattered in Ismaili and non-Ismaili sources, it seems highly probable that the earliest ideas concerning the Imamat and the succession approximated to the archaic type still preserved in Zaydism. To me it seems almost indubitable that succession had little that was mystical about it in those early days. The Imam was the eldest member of the family. Thus, as we have seen, Ḥasan succeeds his father ʻAlī; on his death he is succeeded by his brother Ḥusayn,

and the latter, most probably, is succeeded in his turn by his half-brother, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya. After him later on 'Alī b. Ḥusayn (Zaynu'l-'ābidīn) succeeds as the eldest in the family. Similarly, Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl, according to the custom, was regarded by many as the rightful successor of his grand-father, Imam Ja'far, although according to the *sharī'at* the successor was his uncle, Mūsā b. Ja'far (as admitted by the Ismailis). In his newly founded community his Imamat, continued in his successors, makes his father also an Imam. As we may see, early works, both plain and esoteric, concentrate their efforts on proving this point. It is quite probable that the general attitude to the question of the succession of al-Mahdī and his immediate ancestors was quite the same, and only after the foundation of the Fatimid dynasty the succession from father to the son becomes a rigid rule, the designation of the heir apparent becomes irrevocable, the act of the *naṣṣ* receives the nature of a divine act, etc. In esoteric speculations the position of the Imam is continuously expanding and acquiring greater and greater affinity with things divine. But there is not the slighest reason to believe that such was the position at the earliest period.

Such theories as those of the difference between the *mustaqarr* and *mustawda'* Imams, or the identity of the Mahdī and the Imam belong, without the slightest doubt, to the much later phase in which, under the Fatimids, the belief that genealogy and succession are one and the same thing had been universally accepted. The whole list of the early Shi'ite Imams has been drastically revised, even it may be several times in the course of the evolution of Ismailism. Exception was made only for the case of Ḥasan being succeeded by his brother Ḥusayn, but Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya was forgotten, and his memory was preserved, as that of a *mustawda'* Imam, the guardian of Zaynu'l--'ābidīn, then a minor, in esoteric works only. Similarly, there was rigidly enforced the principle of the impossibility of the heir apparent predeceasing his own father without compromising

his rights to the Imamat. But an exception was made for the case of Ismā'īl b. Ja'far, explained by a complex system of various proofs from Biblical and Coranic analogies, etc. Such works as the *Asrāru'n-nuṭaqā'*, quoted further on, give glimpses of this mentality. It is possible to collect many such traces of gradual adjustment of the tradition to the later and later religious ideas. For instance, Ḥasan disappears later on from the list of the regular Imams with the Nizārīs, and is regarded merely as a *ḥujjat* (also in a later, mystical and higher sense).

Thus nothing can be more erroneous than to follow in the footsteps of the religious writers, and to permit oneself to be misled by anachronisms. There cannot be any doubt that the early Imams were simply Imams, without any difference in their rank, and that it was absolutely impossible for any non-Alid to be regarded as an Imam, on any pretext whatever. There was no division into *mustaqarr* and *mustawda'*, and there could have been no necessity for this, because, as may be very often inferred from the early works, there was a rigid principle that *a minor cannot be the Imam.* Most probably the first case of legitimate succession of a minor was that of al-Ḥākim (in 386/996). Cf. also *Asrāru'n-nuṭaqā'*, Texts, pp. 89-90.

It may be noted that even the idea of the *ḥijāb*, or of a dignitary whose duty was to pretend to be the Imam, thus sheltering the real holder of the office, did not apparently come into use before the third/ninth c., and does not seem to have been extensively used. But it is quite obvious that such "screens" had nothing to do with the genealogy and the succession of the real Imams.

We have now to analyse the doubts raised by the *Ghāyatu'l-mawālīd*, referred to above (cf. pp. 20–23), a late esoteric work, which tradition regards as the work of Sayyid-nā al-Khaṭṭāb, who died in 533/1138. This, however (as mentioned above, p. 22) is highly doubtful; most probably it is a production of a much later period. It contains several surprising revelations regarding the history of the Fatimids. Firstly, al-Mahdī was

not a real, *mustaqarr*, Imam. He was not the 'Ubaydu'l-lāh or 'Abdu'l-lāh, known to history. We must presume in general that this 'Ubaydu'l-lāh never really existed. In reality al-Mahdī was Muḥammad (son of Aḥmad the Imam, we must presume), surnamed Sa'īd, or Sa'īdu'l-Khayr, who in all other works is regarded as the uncle and the guardian of al-Mahdī ('Ubaydu'l--lāh).

Secondly, al-Qā'im, the second Fatimid caliph, was not his son, but the son of the *fourth* concealed Imam, 'Alī, entirely unknown from any other sources, either Ismaili or non-Ismaili. He died on his way to the Maghrib, leaving his son and successor in the charge of this Sa'īd, who later became known as al-Mahdī.

We have no sources either confirming or directly contradicting these statements, and can only rely on the analysis of known dates. The only indication that may be relevant is the strange fact that the author of the *K. al-Azhār* counts the Imamat of al-Mahdī from the date of his departure from Salamiyya (apparently a parallel to the *hijra* of the Prophet) which according to his calculations falls in 283/896 (cf. p. 31).

The only date in this obscure period which is available, and which can be to a certain extent (but by no means unreservedly) relied upon, is that of the birth of al-Mahdī the caliph, 259–260/872-873. If al-Mahdī was 'Abdu'l-lāh, his father (and if he was Muḥammad b. Aḥmad, his brother) al-Ḥusayn died when he was only about 8, according to the best available information, that is to say, in 268/881-2. Although it is by no means certain, it seems that the despatch of Ibn Ḥawshab to the Yaman with his mission was an act of this al-Ḥusayn, in 266/880. Thus, if al-Mahdī was Muḥammad b. Aḥmad, a brother of al-Ḥusayn, the following, consequences seem to follow. Firstly, al-Ḥusayn was Imam for a very short period, as his brother was born to him in 260/873. Secondly, that he was succeeded by this unknown 'Alī, who ruled for at least the period 268–283/882–896, i.e. for fifteen years, without leaving the *slightest trace* of his existence, despite his proximity to the fully historical period of the existence

of the sect. Thirdly, the date of 283/896, for al-Mahdī's departure from Salamiyya is rather too early,— he left not before 287/900 at which time al-Qā'im was a child, who had to be entrusted to a guardian. Thus an Imam, who was in office for 20 years, and must therefore have been not less than about 35–40 years of age, had no other sons except this child,— a situation which seems somewhat improbable.

All this is an accumulation of details which make it difficult to accept the theory. But there are other considerations also. If this 'Alī died *on the way to the Maghrib*, as stated in the *Ghāyatu'l-mawālīd*, the question arises who was the real Mahdī,— he, or his uncle Sa'īd? There is no doubt that the great revolt in N. Africa was a *Mahdī* movement, and it is extremely difficult to believe that if he really claimed to be the Mahdī, but died on the way, his place could have been taken by his much younger relative in such a way that no one noticed the fact, and that even his name, and his very existence, remained unknown to anyone. This theory places considerable strain on the imagination, especially when contrasted with the plain and natural version of the official Fatimid tradition.

Turning to the latter, we may attempt to see whether there is any name mentioned which could form the "substratum" of the legend. The only name that suggests itself is that of the person, mentioned in the *Istitār* only, known as Abū Muḥammad, the brother of al-Mahdī. We do not know whether he was elder or younger than the latter, and what his own name was: he may be anyone, including the 'Alī, mentioned in the *Ghāyatu'l-mawālīd*. It is briefly stated that he remained, with other members of the family, at Salamiyya, after the flight of al-Mahdī, obviously regarding himself as safe from any danger. He had some descendants (97, 102) was suffering from an illness, and died on the day the "Qarmatian" forces, after the siege of Damascus, arrived in Salamiyya, i.e. in the middle of 290/903.

But again doubts arise from the laconism of the available sources: it is noteworthy that in the same place it is stated that

when the "Qarmatian" brothers previously arrived in Salamiyya (in connection with their complaints, and negotiations concerning the dismissal of the eldest, as the *Istitār* narrates), they addressed themselves to this Abū Muḥammad, but were informed that he was *not* (or no longer was ?) the Imam, and that the real Imam, al-Mahdī, had left. The reference to this strange incident (surely, the man who claimed to be the chief *dā'ī* of an important province should have known who was his Imam), apparently preserves in an extremely simplified form an allusion to a very knotty situation.

The most likely solution of this historical puzzle is that the real happenings have suffered later from attempts to force the earlier history of the sect into religious moulds evolved at a much later period under the Fatimids, under the influence of an entirely changed outlook and conditions. It is possible therefore to suggest, quite tentatively and hypothetically, a scheme of reconstruction of the events. Most probably al-Ḥusayn b. Aḥmad was the Imam who died *ca.* 268/881-2, and was succeeded by his brother, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad, surnamed Abū 'Alī al-Ḥakīm, or Sa'īd, who was the eldest male member of the family, and was regarded as an ordinary Imam, in accordance with earlier ideas. He himself died *ca.* 283/896, apparently leaving some posterity, as referred to in the *Istitār*. Apparently he was succeeded by his eldest nephew, Abū Muḥammad, mentioned in the *Istitār*, the *elder* brother of al-Mahdī, as the eldest member of the family. But the latter, being sickly and not very active, most probably was superseded by his ambitious and energetic younger brother, 'Abdu'l-lāh, later known as al-Mahdī. This caused discontent in certain circles, and the defection of Ḥamdān surnamed al-Qarmaṭ, the chief Mesopotamian *dā'ī*, residing in Kalwādhā, near Baghdād. The latter himself apparently really absconded, possibly apostatized, or died (being obviously a very old man), and nothing more was heard about him. His secretary, and possibly successor-designate, 'Abdān, remained in touch with Salamiyya, although to a

certain extent in opposition. At this time Zakrūya b. Mahdūya, i.e. Abū Muḥammad (or Abū Maḥmūd, as he is called by Tabari) Zakariyā b. al-Mahdī al-Kūfī, the chief *dā'ī* of Southern Mesopotamia, died, and his eldest son, Yaḥyā, known as Ṣāḥibu'n-nāqa, "the owner of the miraculous she-camel", apparently succeeded him as the chief *dā'ī*. But the ambitions of Yaḥyā and his brothers apparently led to a clash with his North-Mesopotamian colleague, 'Abdān. Under pretext of disloyalty to the Imam, he disposed of 'Abdān, thus causing ill-feelings in the community, and perhaps even a major split: in the absolute darkness of this period we cannot be sure as to whether this split in fact may not have brought into existence the real Qarmatian movement of the South. As a measure to placate the supporters of 'Abdān, Yaḥyā was dismissed by the Imam (i.e. al-Mahdī, as mentioned in the *Istitār*, 96, quite unequivocally). He, Yaḥyā, acting in full accord with his brothers, tried by negotiation to settle the dispute, and to obtain reinstatement in his office, but failed. Thereupon the brothers personally went to Salamiyya to settle the dispute, but did not find al-Mahdī there. It is more than probable that the affairs which accompanied the dispute, the split, the murder of one of the chiefs, etc., could not have remained hidden, and that the caliph's government really intended to take action against the Salamiyya headquarters. In a legendary form this is found in the story of the *Istitār* regarding the local Turkish governor, who wormed out the secret, and blackmailed al-Mahdī.

One of the most interesting details is the story of the brothers applying to al-Mahdī's *brother* Abū Muḥammad. Was this an attempt to proclaim him the Imam? They obviously had come not only for the settlement of their personal matters, but also for a sort of a council of war, to plan defensive operations against the Baghdad caliph. At any rate, immediately afterwards the elder brother, Yaḥyā, goes to the Bedouin tribes, who were already converted to Ismailism, in order to mobilise a force; his younger brother, al-Ḥusayn, Abū Mahzūl of the *Istitār*,

known to history as Ṣāḥibu'sh-shāma, or Ṣāḥibu'l-khāl, i.e. "the possessor of the (prophetic ?) mole", remains as a sort of a liaison officer between al-Mahdī in his secret refuge, and his own brother; and the youngest, Muḥammad, apparently returns to Kūfa to act as a deputy to his brother in his original headquarters. The rest of the story is narrated in the *Istitār*, and is sufficiently known from general history.

If we suppose that the Abū Muḥammad, mentioned here as the brother of al-Mahdī, was really the mysterious 'Alī, and the father of al-Qā'im, who really died in Salamiyya from illness while preparing to start on his journey to the Maghrib, many difficult situations arise, as already mentioned above (p. 57). If he really reigned for twenty years, why has his name fallen so completely out of the history of the sect ? Why was Muḥammad b. Aḥmad given the name of 'Abdu'l-lāh, and why was al-Mahdī generally treated as a different person ? We should have to introduce a large number of "corrections": Abū Muḥammad was not a brother of al-Mahdī, al-Qā'im was not his son, 'Abdu'l-lāh b. al-Ḥusayn never existed, the story of Muḥammad b. Aḥmad having been his guardian is an invention, and so on. It looks as if this mysterious 'Alī is a mere product of imagination; but, at the same time, it is difficult to be certain of this. We can therefore only postpone a final decision until more materials come to light.

To sum up, it does not seem that the doubts which arise from the various reports found in Ismaili sources, or other facts which evoke suspicions, are sufficiently strong to shake the traditional version very seriously; but this is without prejudice to the question whether that version is true, or not.

3. *A Portrait of al-Mahdī.*

To the details concerning al-Mahdī and his family, reviewed above, an interesting addition may be made,— namely what most probably is quite a reliable and true indication as to his personal appearance. This is found in the *Sharḥu'l-akhbār*,

by Qāḍī an-Nu'mān, mentioned above, in the fifteenth book, dealing with the prophecies concerning the Mahdī. A special chapter is here entirely devoted further on to prophecies concerning his advent; we may simply analyse the matter without going into the general nature of this kind of historical information.

As is known, amongst other matters connected with the expected advent of the Mahdī, that is Divinely guided Deliverer of the world, some prophecies set out certain features or physical qualities which the promised Messiah should possess. Both Sunnite and Shi'ite traditions preserve references to these. As is already pointed out by the late D. S. Margoliouth ("On Mahdis and Mahdiism", in the *Proceedings of the British Academy*, vol. VII, pp. 9-10), such references are already found in the collection of the *ḥadīths* of Abū Dā'ūd (202–275/817–888), from which they were derived by different later authors. "It is here that a description of the Mahdī is given: his nose is to be of a particular shape, and his hair of a particular cut". Cf. also D. B. Macdonald's article in the *E.I.*, vol. III, p. 114*b*. It seems very probable that if such physical features were already described in the earliest versions of such prophecies, they were adjusted on different occasions to fit different claimants. In Shi'ite literature they were numerous. The *Ithna-'ashari* versions most probably were modelled on the traditional description of 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib himself [1], perhaps with certain modifications. We find many of these in the great Shi'ite Encyclopaedia, the *Biḥāru'l-anwār*, of Moḥammad Bāqir b. Muḥammad Taqī Majlisī, vol. XIII (completed in 1078/1667; lith. Iṣfahān, 1304).

On p. 11 it is stated that the Mahdī will be a man from the progeny of Fāṭima, young, of middle height, with handsome face, with hair hanging to his shoulders, with hooked nose, and

[1] As is well-known, the traditional portrait of 'Alī was that of his ripe age, probably not long before his death: he was rather short in stature, corpulent, with big stomach; of darkish complexion, big black eyes, tall forehead, signs of incipient baldness. When he was smiling or speaking, he showed a full mouth of excellent teeth.

high forehead. This is said on the authority of Jābir (ibn 'Abdi'l-lāh) al-Anṣārī, who heard it from Imam Muḥammad al--Bāqir. Other prophecies (page 10) invariably add a fat stomach (which the Arabs regarded as the sign of bravery). Some other prophecies add moles between shoulders, or on the face.

Qāḍī Nu'mān quotes four *ḥadīths* which in many respects resemble all these. But of the foregoing features only the hooked nose is left: the fat belly, and different moles are not mentioned. Instead of these other features are referred to.

Tradition no. 11: "From the *ḥadīth* narrated by Sufyān ath-Thawrī, who related it from the Prophet, who said: the Mahdī will be a man, descending from me. I see his face shining like a glittering star: his complexion will be as that of the Arabs, and his figure like the figure of a Jew".

Qāḍī Nu'mān adds: "And so it was with al-Mahdī, who was handsome, one of the handsomest faced man. His face really was like a "glittering star", as the Prophet described it. The glittering star is the one which shines much. And so it was in the case of al-Mahdī: his face was lit and luminous, as if light radiated from it upon those who were looking at him. The expression "his complexion will be that of the Arabs" comes true because it was the same as that of the Prophet of God, the lord of the Arabs,— light, with red showing through it. It was that which Arab connoisseurs in such matters call "soft bronzed",— the term *abyaḍ*, "white", is not used in application to the complexion of human beings. This colour is found in the majority of the Arab noblemen, and is regarded as the most attractive.

And the words of the Prophet: "his body will be like the body of a Jew" refers to the circumstance that Jews are usually well built, in a great majority of cases heavier than the Arabs.[1]

[1] Any one who has seen various kinds of Oriental Jews will be surprised to read this. But this is not merely a matter of taste: this is obviously a variant of the element of corpulence, found in other traditions. A respectable, highly placed man must not be thin, looking underfed or emaciated; and the Jews, usually leading a sedentary life, were obviously more inclined to corpulence than the Arabs.

And so was al-Mahdī,— handsome, portly, strongly built. Every one who would walk by his side would look smaller in comparison with him.* And the same was the case with all those to whom the Imamat was transferred after him, till now. God has given them superiority, handsomeness, and perfection.

During the days of his life in disguise al-Mahdī was trying to conceal himself, and make himself unnoticeable, but could not: wherever he went, every one who was spying for him, on seeing him, would say: "by God, this must be a prince; he cannot be a shopkeeper or trader, as he says he is".

The same was the case with al-Manṣūr when he tried to disguise himself in order that he might overhear what some people said. He used to change his dress, putting on different clothes, and mixing with the crowd, ordering them not to show him signs of respect, but to treat him as one of themselves, and they did so. He did this in some of his journeys, but could not hide his identity. He entered in disguise certain frontier fortresses, occupied by people who have never seen him before, but was recognised by them. He did this after his victory over the accursed Mukhlid, when the latter was taken prisoner; and also when Mu'tadd b. Muḥammad b. Jazar was in prison. When they saw him, both of them recognised him, although they had never seen him before. The Arabs have a proverb about such things: "alas, the moon cannot be concealed".

Tradition no. 12. "Said 'Abdu'l-lāh b. 'Umar what was reported to him, or transferred to him from the Prophet: the Mahdī will be given the strength of ten people.

And so it really was with al-Mahdī, who was physically very strong, and famous for this, since his early days".

Tradition no. 13. "One of the *ḥadīths* of Qatāda, ascending to the Prophet, who said: al-Mahdī will have a high forehead, and aquiline nose. He shall fill the earth with justice and equity even as it has been filled with injustice and oppression".

"And so it was the case with al-Mahdī, who had a hooked nose and open forehead,— both qualities being regarded as

the most attractive. And he really filled the country that had come under his authority with justice; and those who come after him, his descendants the Imams, will fill with justice the rest of the earth, with their preaching. Its foundation has been laid by him, as we have already mentioned above. One of the past Imams was asked: art thou the Mahdī? And he replied: how can I be the Mahdī when I am an old man? And he took the hand of one of those who were asking, and passed it over his skin, saying: al-Mahdī should be the one who does not require help in mounting a horse".

Tradition no. 14. "It is narrated from 'Abdu'l-lāh b. Mas'ūd, from what reached him from the Prophet, that the latter said: the Mahdī will not have a single white hair in his head or his beard".

"And so it was the case with al-Mahdī. When he became the Imam, succeeding the Imam who was before him, appointing him as his successor by a *naṣṣ*, as the *Mahdī'l-a'imma* (or *Muhdī'l-a'imma*?), and his *dā'īs* began to preach this everywhere, he was young, passing from boyhood to the age of young men, and being a very handsome young man".

It is quite obvious that Qāḍī Nu'mān was writing this after the death of al-Manṣūr (334–341/946–953). And although his tone is clearly laudatory when he refers to his masters, it is difficult to believe that he could completely pervert facts, known to a wide number of his contemporaries. Therefore we may safely expect that his remarks are quite reliable, and contain historical truth. What he says about al-Mahdī's age at the time of his succession, fits very well the assumption that he became an Imam about 283/896: he was then just over twenty years of age.

In any case, Qāḍī Nu'mān is fully entitled to speak with authority on such a matter as the appearance of al-Mahdī. As is known, he came into his service in 313/925, and undoubtedly had ample chance of seeing him during the nine last years of his reign.

III. AL-MAHDI AND THE "QARMATIAN" INVASION OF SYRIA.

The history of the Shi'ite movement, of which Ismailism was one of manifestations, has not yet received the attention which it deserves. What is available in early Ismaili sources has been collected in my paper, "Early Shi'ite Movements" (JBBRAS, 1941, pp. 1–23). What can be gathered from Ismaili sources about the origin of the sect is discussed in another paper, "Ismailis and Qarmatians" (JBBRAS, 1940, pp. 43–85), and the further history of the family of the Imams is traced above, on pp. 29–45. Summed up in a few lines, the picture appears to be approximately as follows. Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl, who escaped to Persia, and most probably lived somewhere on the confines of Khūzistān and N. Fārs, found a certain number of supporters and followers, just in the same way as other Alids did. On his death, most probably soon after 180/796, his party, or sect, split between his different sons, and a considerable proportion of his following, making much capital out of his being the *seventh* in succession from 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, adopted the belief that he, being the seventh Imam, should also be the seventh Nāṭiq, or Great Prophet, whose mission was to reveal the last, final, and perfect religion which would fill the earth with justice. Such beliefs have left indellible traces in the esoteric doctrine of Ismailism; similar theories, as we see from the account of different Shi'ite sects of that period, were very often adopted in respect of other Alids on their deaths. But, in the atmosphere of the strong living spirit of Shi'ite aspirations, such sects, of the *wāqifa*, or *waqfiyya* type, apparently never lasted long. Expectations of the "return in glory" of this or that Shi'ite saint were quite acceptable, but life insistently demanded something tangible, and most probably in all cases the partisans of such sects gradually filtered into the groups

supporting this or that new candidate. It is quite possible that one of the sons of the late Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl, 'Abdu'l-lāh (whose existence is doubted by Tabari, III, 2218, and who possibly was the real "impious 'Abdu'l-lāh b. Maymūn"), proved to be stronger than the other brothers in the struggle, and won the day. He settled in Salamiyya, probably in the beginning of the third/ninth c., living in disguise, and gradually his and his successors' efforts at propaganda were crowned with considerable success. In this they profited by the unrest and discontent prevalent in the Abbasid state, and especially the failures and discords in the other Shi'ite sects, from which followers could be won over as time passed.

If all this is to some extent true,—and this seems very likely,—this 'Abdu'l-lāh could only have been a genuine descendant of Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl: rarely is the argument of *cui prodest* so convincing. He supported the principle of the continued Imamat because he was the person who would benefit from its acceptance by his followers, and he could claim this only because there was no doubt as to his right. It is quite possible that an early Shi'ite theologian, a contemporary of Imam Ja'far aṣ-Ṣādiq, 'Abdu'l-lāh b. Maymūn al-Qaddāḥ, together with others, had *some* connection with the sect, perhaps in its earliest phase,—this is entirely obscure. But it seems utterly improbable that he could "pose" as an Imam, and become the progenitor of the Fatimids. Most probably he was elder than Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl, and it is very unlikely that he survived him. Even if he did, there is little doubt that he would have supported the Messianic beliefs regarding the deceased Imam, himself assuming the rank of his supreme lieutenant, high priest, or whatever it may be, which would give him a complete control of the whole movement. This, in fact, was the course adopted by the founders of the sect of the Druzes two centuries later.

The question of the relation between the Ismailis and the Qarmatians, and also of the religion of this latter sect, is extremely

complex, and this complexity obviously comes from great confusion of terms, wrongly applied to different religious groups. The only sense that we can get from the conflicting reports is that the local Lower Mesopotamian term, *karmīthā* or *karmūthā*, unknown to Arabic elsewhere, implied an agriculturist, a villager [1]. This later on was Arabicised into *qarmaṭ*, which had different meanings in Arabic [2]. This occurred in connection with the name of a prominent local leader, Ḥamdān Qarmaṭ, and the whole group was treated as his followers, as "named after him", although many of its members possibly had no real connection with him.

Looking into available reports, such as that of Tabari and others, we find an extraordinary combination of the most irreconcilable religious elements reported as forming the Qarmatian religion. Rejection of formal Muhammadan worship (*rufḍu'ẓ-ẓāhir*) is mentioned side by side with a maniacal external piety in the form of *fifty* Islamic daily prayers obligatory on every member [3]. An extraordinary collection of Imams of rival branches are supported: Ismaili, Kaysanite, and others [4]. In some beliefs we may recognise a connection with the Kaysāniyya, in others with the Khaṭṭābiyya; and even Kharijite ideas are common. All this presumes a certain amount of syncretism, which would be quite probable in the beliefs of the masses, in which all these sects, at different times, found many recruits. But it is obvious that there must be certain limits even in the

[1] Cf. L. Massignon's article on the subject, "Enc. of Islam", vol. II, p. 767. Almost every author offers his own version. At present, according to the statement of a specialist on Lower Mesopotamia, it appears that the expression is no longer used.

[2] In Arabic the root *q-r-m-ṭ* means "to walk, making short steps", and thence "to write closely", etc.

[3] Tabari, III, 2126. His reference is quite unique; most probably it refers to only a small community.

[4] It must be carefully noted, however, that as no genuine Qarmatian literature is preserved, all such references are necessarily derived from various non-sectarian authors, who with the rarest exceptions are not only unreliable, but usually deliberately misleading. In any case, no reference is known to any Imam of the *real* Qarmatians, i.e. the Qarmatians of Baḥrayn.

worst cases of syncretism, and it seems highly probable that there were distinct groups, perhaps even rival sects, which were all sweepingly styled "Qarāmiṭa", or Qarmatians, without any regard to details. Then, when the "Qarmatians" of Baḥrayn made their name hateful to the whole of the Islamic world, such confusion was perpetuated consciously and deliberately.[1]

Information concerning the "Qarmatians" of Baḥrayn, and their real beliefs, clearly points to their close connection not with Mesopotamia, but with S.W. *Persia,*— Jannāba, Ṣirāf, etc. It is quite possible that they must ultimately be classed as a variety of the Ismailis (as both these sects are persistently connected in all reports), and different features in what little transpires about their religion may give some ground for the suggestion that it may have been a development of the original *wāqifa* phase of Ismailism, expecting the "return" of Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl, complicated by other Shi'ite and even Kharijite influences. Most probably these had very little in common with Fatimid Ismailism, both in letter and spirit. Neither did Fatimid Ismailism present a toned down form of the "original revolutionary ideas" of the "Qarmatians", nor was the religion of the Abū Sa'īdīs of Baḥrayn in any way dependent on the doctrine of the Fatimids. Both obviously were products of separate lines of evolution, of different social and economic conditions, ethnic milieus, etc.

The success of the Fatimid propaganda was not due to any supernatural causes. The Shi'ite movement had already attained quite a respectable age of almost two centuries, and was still vigorous despite the absence of prominent figures amongst the crowd of candidates for the leadership. Even the most important of these, the future line of the Twelvers, temporarily

[1] That the word Qarmaṭī was used as an abusive term clearly appears from the fact that the authors of the *Istitār* and *Sīrat* of Ja'far apply it to the Ṣāḥibu'sh-shāma, the younger brother, although they do not apply it to his elder brother, Ṣāḥibu'n-nāqa. Both knew quite well that these "Qarāmiṭa" were really Ismailis, devout followers of al-Mahdī, and had nothing to do with the Qarmatians of Baḥrayn, who looted Mekka.

lost all their prestige in the second half of the third/ninth c., on account of family discords and the unworthy behaviour of some of its members. The Abbasid empire was already a matter of the past, and new dynasties were springing up in all provinces. Economic distress, due to unsettled conditions, was growing.

The extraordinary triumphs of the Fatimids, following each other in quick succession, were obviously due to this widespread discontent and unrest, coupled with a favourable superstitious atmosphere, widespread and ardent expectations of the advent of the promised Messiah, the Deliverer, who was due to make his appearance by the end of the third century after the death of the Prophet. Strangely enough, though there are many reports of insurrections led by different Alids in connection with the similar beliefs concerning the end of the first century A.H., reports of similar risings at this period are remarkably few. Obviously the Fatimids, and al-Mahdī, staked their all on this,—and won, completely overshadowing their competitors.

Scrutinizing the map of the Ismaili movement at this period we may to some extent perceive the mainsprings of its mechanism. The mission to the Yaman is sent in 266/879, and by 293/906 the province is completely under the control of Ibn Ḥawshab. The activities of the "Qarmatians" in Lower Mesopotamia begin, as Tabari attests, in 278/891; and although the main effort, probably badly organised, the invasion of Syria in 290/903, fails, repeated raids continue long after this. Ultimately comes the grand insurrection in the Maghrib, which in 297/909 crowns the success of the Fatimids, and permits them to lay the foundations of a new caliphate. The only corner where their activities did not produce any visible result was "Daylam", i.e. the Caspian provinces with the adjoining Elburz mountainous belt.

Lower Mesopotamia, with the neighbouring parts of Khūzistān, which was apparently the cradle of the Ismaili movement, as is known, had a long record of continuous insurrections, led

by different Alids. The new cities, which rose under the Arabs, Baṣra and Kūfa, originally as military settlements, and later as important trading centres [1], were always famous for their turbulent population, and were hotbeds of unrest. This is usually explained by the statement that they were always full of fluid elements, collected from different provinces. It seems, however, from different reports of Alid risings that not only the cities, but also the *sawād,* i.e. the rural area, contributed to such movements; and this, as also the mixture of different sects, is easily explained by the local conditions.

Lower Mesopotamia, a very fertile, but also a very unhealthy country, a real image of hell during the greater part of the year, entirely depends on its canals for cultivation. An irrigation system, as is well-known, requires considerable investment of capital, which only wealthy landlords possess. The labour in such localities is usually drawn from different areas affected by economic distress. Agriculturists who for some reason become unsettled in their original habitation, or are pressed by such factors as religious persecutions, are usually the only labour available on the market. It is exactly what this "*karmīthā*" population was,— a motley crowd of hard pressed needy villagers from different districts, with very various religious beliefs, customs, etc. Their life in difficult conditions, in great misery, and with not the slighest prospect of betterment, most probably was terrible, and fully explains their readiness to support any political movement which could promise them even the slight hope of a change for the better. The great demand for agricultural labour is shown by the fact of the intense importation of Negro slaves, which led to the well-known and terrible insurrection of 255–270/869–883 (cf. *E.I.*, IV, 1213), accompanied by desperate struggle and enormous bloodshed on both sides, and only suppressed with great difficulty; such reports as Tabari's (III, 2127)

[1] Baṣra was the most important port on the Persian Gulf, and had superseded the ancient Obolla; and Kūfa was the head of the caravan routes across the desert to Syria and to Mekka.

about the policy of the local governor, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad aṭ-Ṭayyī, is very interesting. Being appointed in 269/882 as governor of the Western districts of Lower Mesopotamia, and residing in Kūfa, he permitted the "Qarmatians" to profess their religion, but imposed a tax of one *dīnār* per head, collecting by this means large sums. Such extraordinarily tolerant policy most probably was not only dictated by financial considerations, but also evidently was endorsed by the practice of attracting necessary labour, badly needed by the country. Apparently such magnanimous tolerance towards Shi'ites by no means formed a part of the Abbasid policy in general, as is clear from the subsequent lines, referring to protests of cautious people who warned the government against the "new sect". The restrictive measures, apparently taken after the retirement of the governor in 275/888 (de Goeje, *Mém.*, 27) by his successors, led to insurrections of 279/892, 284/897, 287/900, 288/901, and 289/902, before the grand revolt and invasion of Syria.

Economic conditions in "Daylam", i.e. Caspian provinces, with which the Imams of Salamiyya had strong connections, as is persistently indicated by different Ismaili sources, were a parallel to those in the *sawād* of Kūfa and Baṣra. Here the belt of ricefields on the coastal plains even to the present day is chiefly cultivated with the help of what may be called "distress labour", the proletarianised surplus labour of the half starving villages in the adjoining mountainous districts of Rūdbār, Alamūt, Ṭāliqān, and elsewhere, who for miserable wages do enormously hard work in terrible conditions of continuous excessive humidity, heat or cold. These provinces always harboured many Shi'ite sects, and were the scene of various insurrections which lacked importance only on account of the remoteness of the provinces from the vital centres of the caliphate.

The Yaman, with its terraced slope cultivation, and the proximity of nomads, probably presented its own economic difficulties, while the grievances of the Banū 'Ulayṣ camelmen.

plying between the trading centres of Southern Mesopotamia and Syria, probably were much nearer to those of the Berbers of the remote portions of Ifrīqiyya, exploited by the Arab city population.

Ismaili sources preserve no detailed information as to the activities of their headquarters, or individual *dā'īs*, until we have an apparently authentic report preserved in the *Sīra* of Ibn Ḥawshab (which itself, very unfortunately, is lost), relating to as late a date as 266/879. But such an act as sending a missionary to the Yaman shows that the practice was not a novelty in other places. In the reports preserved in non-Ismaili literature we may find some interesting references, though it is not an easy task to separate the grains of truth in them from inventions and deliberate perversions.

The story of the "origin" of the "Qarmatian sect", as narrated by Ṭabari and other early authors, has been carefully analysed, after de Sacy, by de Goeje, in his *Mémoire* (pp. 16 sqq.); it was repeatedly popularised by many other authors, and is familiar to every student of Ismailism. There are, however, many implications in it which completely escaped the attention of those who were not familiar with Ismaili sources. Pieced together with the latter, this story, as usually happens after such an operation, shows the matters in a different light, revealing their true proportions.

In his summary de Goeje collates two versions of the origin of the Qarmatian movement. One, by Akhū Muḥsin, which is probably taken from the lost work of Ibn Razzām (de Sacy, Intr., 168 sq.), and is also quoted in the *Fihrist* of Ibn an-Nadīm, most probably ultimately comes from early Ismaili sources. The other is that of Tabari (III, 2124, sq.), based on the report of an Abbasid official, Muḥammad b. Dā'ūd b. al-Jarrāḥ, who interrogated a captured Ismaili, supposed to be the son-in-law of the famous Ismaili *dā'ī* Zakrūya b. Mahdūya.

The most interesting point about this version is that it is strictly localised: the scene is laid on the estates of a rich landlord,

al-Haytham al-'Ijlī, whom Tabari mentions as early as under 250/864, and then under 267/880 and 269/882. This gives us some material for the dating of the events. The estate is situated in the district of Nahrayn, or Quss Bahrām. A certain Ḥusayn, a man of ascetic habits, an Ismaili *dā'ī*, comes from Ahwāz, in Khūzistān, which, together with 'Askar Mukram, so often figures in these early Ismaili stories. He succeeds in converting several people, including an able and talented local man Ḥamdān, surnamed Qarmaṭ. After this Ḥusayn the *dā'ī* is never mentioned again; probably he leaves the place, and attention is entirely concentrated on Ḥamdān. De Goeje speculates as to whether this Ḥusayn is the same as Ḥusayn, *son* of 'Abdu'l-lāh b. Maymūn al-Qaddāḥ (the latter had by that time been dead for nearly a century), the father of al-Mahdī. This is obviously highly improbable: the head of the sect, living in strict disguise, would hardly risk going through the experiences described in connection with this Ḥusayn [1].

We may note the admirable logic of these stories: a missionary comes to a village, and, amongst others, converts a certain capable man. The convert takes his new religion with enthusiasm, makes progress in the service of the sect, and, probably after a considerable time, attains a high position as the local "bishop". It is even not certain whether he really was the chief *dā'ī*. Then for the sole reason that his name was Ḥamdān the Karmūthā, i.e. S. Mesopotamian villager, which he was, Arabicised into Qarmaṭ, all his compatriots — *karmūthās*,

[1] As may be seen from the *Istitār*, the Bedouin tribes of the Syrian and Mesopotamian desert were converted by the efforts of Abū'l-Ḥusayn b. al-Aswad, obviously an expert missionary of long standing who was appointed the chief *dā'ī* by al-Mahdī. It may be not altogether improbable that this Abū'l-Ḥusayn and Ḥusayn in Tabari's account are one and the same person. The reason that after the conversion of Ḥamdān he completely vanishes from the stage, is quite obvious: as may be seen further on, translations (Texts, p. 100), there is a precious allusion in the *Asrāru'n-Nuṭaqā'* to an important detail of the Fatimid methods of organisation of their propaganda. Missionaries sent from the centre organised local "cells", which carried on the further spread of the preaching. Thus, on the local "cell" under Ḥamdān being set up, the *dā'ī* shifts to some other place.

regardless of their real persuasion, and their relations with him, have become Qarmatians, and he himself has bloomed into the *founder* of the "Qarmatian sect"! This story is then for centuries repeated by learned authors, and is even now discussed with profound learning by modern scholars, who build wonderful theories on this basis.

There is an important feature of mediaeval and popular psychology, the full implications of which are not yet properly realised. The mass mind is extremely personal and categorical in its reasoning. Such ideas as those of cumulative process, the creative activities of the masses, and so on, do not exist for it. Everything must have a definite cause, and this cause is always personal: God creates the world, Adam is the first man, Eve — the first woman, etc. Any amount of similar reasoning is to be found in Muslim historical works: the first man who composed a poem in Persian, or was called Ṣūfī, and so forth. Qarmaṭ and 'Abdu'l-lāh ibn al-Qaddāḥ also belong to the same popular series of the "first men who": Qarmaṭ was "the first man who" was so surnamed, and the "Qarmatians" are called *after him*. Therefore he was the founder of the sect. In just the same way 'Abdu'l-lāh b. Maymūn al-Qaddāḥ was "the first man who" introduced the Ismaili doctrine. *Therefore* he was also the progenitor of the Fatimids.

As mentioned above (cf. p. 48), Ḥamdān was the chief *dā'ī*, although it is not clear whether he was in charge of his own district only, or the whole of Mesopotamia. The latter is more probable. 'Abdān, his brother-in-law, acted as his secretary,— probably he was his deputy. Their headquarters, as mentioned above, was in Kalwādhā, close to Baghdād, since 261/875, according to the *Fihrist* (cf. de Goeje, 31). If this is true, the conversion of Ḥamdān was a matter of the earlier half of the third/ninth century.

As we have seen above (p. 48), in 286 or 287/899-900 great changes took place: Ḥamdān "apostatized" and disappeared. His "secretary" was murdered. (Abū Muḥammad) Zakrūya

b. Mahdūya (al-Kūfī), apparently a district *dā'ī* of Kūfa, was appointed the chief *dā'ī* (for the whole of Mesopotamia?) in succession to Ḥamdān, but died soon [1]. He was succeeded (in his post of the *dā'ī* of Kūfa?) by his eldest son Yaḥyā, who is known to history under the name of the Ṣāḥibu'n-nāqa ("the owner of the she-camel"), or "the Shaykh", and is in the *Istitār* politely referred to under the name of Abū'l-Qāsim. He perished in the battle of Damascus, in 290/903.

Abū'l-Ḥusayn b. al-Aswad, who dismissed him from his post, as stated in the *Istitār*, 96, was apparently the *dā'ī*-in-chief, and in this office was later on succeeded by Fīrūz. The reason for his residing in Ḥamā, just over twenty miles from Salamiyya, is clearly stated [2]. It was obviously a precautionary measure.

It is interesting that although Ismaili tradition plainly mentions the death of Zakrūya as having occurred *before* the invasion of Syria, non-Ismaili sources make him live much longer, and after a series of romantic adventures, periods of hiding, etc., he appears as participating in a raiding party in 294/906. Tabari, III, 2275, narrates a lengthy story of such a Qarmatian raid, which ended by the siege of a certain village

[1] The name appears as Dhikrawaih, Zikrwaih, Zikrūya, Zakrūya, etc., son of Mihrwaih, Mihrawaih, Mihrūya, Mahrūya, etc. There is not the slightest room for doubt as to this being a "contemptive diminutive" form, of the Persian type, which was widely used in the third/ninth c., but later completely disappeared. It is quite obvious that "Zikrwaih" has nothing to do with *dhikr*, but is a contemptive form of the name Zakariyā. De Sacy consistently writes "Zakrouya, fils de Mahrouya", but on p. 184, Introduction, note 2, he "corrects" himself: "Je crois que la vraie prononciation de ces noms *persans* est Zicrwaih et Mihrwaih. Mihrwaih signifie *semblable au soleil ou à Mithra*". This is obviously the effect of the silly stories about Ismailism trying to supersede Islam with the "religion of the Magians", etc. No, it seems quite obvious that "Mihrwaih" has nothing to do with the sun, Mithra, and the Magians. It is simply a similar "contemptive" form of the name of Mahdī, in which *d*, easily confused in some handwritings with *r*, has been read wrongly under the influence of these stories.

[2] Ḥamā, the ancient Epiphania, one of the most important towns of Syria, on the Orontes river, lies on the main road Aleppo-Hama-Homs-Damascus-Jerusalem. As is stated in the *Istitār*, the purpose of his settling there was to be "on the road to Egypt", with which Syria was connected at that time, being under the jurisdiction of the Governor of Egypt. At the same time, of course, the chief *dā'ī* was within easy reach, a day's ride by an easy road.

known as Fayd. At the beginning of Rab. I 294/January 907 a certain Waṣīf b. Ṣawārtagīn was sent against him from Qādisiyya with a force of tribal levies. He came in contact with the raiders on Saturday 22 Rab. I 294/11–I–907 (the day really was a Saturday); fighting continued on the next day, and "Zakrūya" was severely wounded, captured with his relatives and closest associates, and died five days later. All this seems highly improbable: it is difficult to believe that an old man much over sixty would participate in a desert raid and in fighting. Most probably it was a real Qarmatian headman, who was made into the famous Zakrūya to enhance the glory of the successful operation.

Concerning Zakrūya, i.e. Abū Muḥammad (in Tabari Abū Maḥmūd) Zakariyā b. al-Mahdī al-Kūfī, question has been already raised whether he was the son of al-Mahdī b. Hurmuz mentioned in the '*Uyūnu'l-akhbār* as a devout *dā'ī* of Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl and his successor, and whether he was a brother of Yaḥyā b. al-Mahdī aṣ-Ṣamāmī or aṭ-Ṭamāmī, who was murdered about the same time in Baḥrayn [1]. There is nothing improbable in the supposition that all these leaders were related to each other.

Neither the name of Ḥamdān, nor of 'Abdān is found in Ismaili sources, as far as I know. But there can be little doubt that the passage in the *Istitār*, 96, concerning the murder of their brother-in-law by the sons of Zakrūya, on account of his being a *munāfiq*, i.e. a renegade, or traitor, refers to 'Abdān. "There was *a man* who was the husband of their sister". Seeing that such a severe punishment was meted out to Yaḥyā for his crime, it is obvious that "a man" in question was of considerable importance. Nuwayrī, or his sources, credit the murder to the Imam himself; but this is only one of the innumerable instances of his super-knowledge of all secrets and mysteries. It is, nevertheless, worth notice that the brothers seriously regarded them-

[1] Cf. "Ismailis and Qarmatians", p. 85.

selves as having been wronged, and were extremely indignant. If it is true that the murder took place about 287/900, the chronology excellently fits the version of the *Istitār*, which seems quite reliable here. It appears that they made lengthy complaints and protests by correspondence, which were left unanswered by al-Mahdī, and that the matter occupied a whole year (*Istitār*, 97). Only after this did the brothers apparently venture to pay a personal visit to Salamiyya. They, however, did not find al-Mahdī there[1]: he had fled before this date, and was hiding at Ramla (*Ist.*, 97). The reasons for his flight were most probably many: according to the *Sīra* of Ja'far (cf. p. 109 sq.) he fled from the danger of arrest by the Abbasid agents, because his activities were unveiled by an energetic local governor. The *Sīra* explains that al-Mahdī was always generous with presents to the governors, thus probably buying their acquiescence. But this one, collecting important information about him, began to blackmail him. By wirepulling through his *dā'īs* in Baghdād, al-Mahdī succeeded in having him recalled. But the Turk submitted a report to the caliph, and was sent back with a military force to seize al-Mahdī, who was informed by his agents by carrier pigeon. Perhaps another serious consideration was the threat of revenge from the supporters of 'Abdān. It is interesting that Sayyid-nā Idrīs incorporates only the version connected with the suspicious governor (cf. also above, p. 60).

The flight from Salamiyya soon after 286/899 is positively confirmed by an important witness,—Ibn Ḥawqal, himself probably an Ismaili (de Goeje, 63). It is apparently a fact that al-Mahdī was already settled in Sijilmāsa in 292/905. Different authorities mention that al-Mahdī arrived in Egypt during the governorship of 'Īsā Nūsharī, who was appointed in the month of Jum. II 292/April 905. De Goeje (64-65) expresses doubts, but it seems that the *Istitār* not only supports this,

[1] Here comes the interesting statement that they, on arrival there, applied to al-Mahdī's *brother*, Abū Muḥammad, taking him for the head of the sect. Cf. above, p. 59.

but also explains the reasons, which are entirely obscure in non-Ismaili versions. It is interesting that according to the version of the *Sīra* of Ja'far, al-Mahdī travelled to Egypt without any stop en route. But he apparently confuses much by reason of the remoteness of the events.

The version of the *Istitār* throws the most interesting light on what followed: the three brothers, i.e. Yaḥyā (who is more or less respectfully referred to as Abū'l-Qāsim), Ḥusayn, who is here invariably styled Abū Mahzūl [1], or al-Qarmaṭī, and Abū'l-'Abbās, the youngest, who apparently soon returned to his country (*Ist.*, 97; he was also called Muḥammad), began to make inquiries in Salamiyya about al-Mahdī, and wormed out the secret of his refuge in Ramla. Then the elder, Yaḥyā, went to the camps of the tribe of the Banū 'Ulayṣ, who had been converted by the *dā'ī* Abū'l-Ḥusayn, and called themselves Fāṭimī (probably the early appellation of the Ismailis) [2]. Whatever were his real intentions, apparently the official purpose was clear: to defend the head of the sect, the Imam, who was in danger, and had had to flee, leaving behind his family and property. Apparently the story about the Turkish governor is not entirely false: the Badoos, who, it seems, immediately answered the call with great enthusiasm, definitely followed the course of the Euphrates, by which the Abbasid force was moving, raided Ruṣāfa, an important old town between Upper Mesopotamia and Syria, burning the chief mosque there (Tabari, III, 2219) in the end of 289/Oct.-Nov. 902, after having completely defeated the Turk, who is called Subk, or Subuk ad-Daylamī (or also Salamī). According to Tabari, "Zakrūya b. Mahdūya" specially converted the Badoos, through his sons

[1] It is difficult to see the abusive implications of this expression: the father of the contemptible one, the subject of jokes. Perhaps the expression is chosen to rhyme with his original *kunya*.

[2] In the text of the *Istitār* the tribes are called Qāṣiyyūn. This apparently is a misreading of the original Fāṭimiyyūn. Most probably later scribes, being ignorant of history, were puzzled by such a strange application of the term, and "corrected" the expression.

(III, 2217), the version of the *Istitār* seems to be more reliable Apparently everything was rapidly improvised, and this is why the rising did not achieve any serious success

We are now on sound historical ground,— Tabari gives sufficient information about the events The information of the *Istitār* is invariably more detailed, and apparently comes from a much better informed source, supplying the most vital and essential parts of the picture

When news about the attack of the Badoos reached the governor of Syria, Tughj, or, probably better Tughuch, the founder of the Ikhshidid dynasty in Egypt, he moved out against them with a small punitive force, probably acting on inadequate information, was severely defeated by the Badoos, and hardly succeeded in slipping into well fortified Damascus. The "Qarmatians" followed him to the city, and besieged it

It is difficult to see how large the horde of the Bedouins was Tabari (III, 2219) says that there were a hundred thousand of the followers of Zakrūya amongst the Banū 'Ulays and Banū'l-Asbagh, ' in Sawād, in the East, and in the West" According to Tabari (III, 2221), the report of 'Ali b 'Īsā, the governor of Raqqa, in Upper Mesopotamia, received in Baghdād on the 25 Muharram 290/28 Jan 903, emphasised their numbers But it is doubtful whether their total strength exceeded 6-7 thousand According to this report, Subk himself attacked the Bedouins making a sortie from Raqqa, where, apparently, he was already encamped, he himself was killed in action, and the remnants of the Abbasid troops fled The invaders turned towards Rusāfa, looted some villages and the town, as mentioned above, and continued their way to Syria, where they probably were attacked by Tughj in February Already on the 7th Rab II/10-3-903 a report was received in Baghdād of Tughj having made an unsuccessful sortie from besieged Damascus Merchants and other people were mobilised for the defence (T, III, 2222) The news of the death of 'the Shaykh" in the battle at the gate of Damascus, which is described in the terms quite similar to the

picture given in the *Istitār*, was received in Baghdād on the 16th Sha'bān 290/15-6-903. It is therefore quite clear that the siege lasted about four months. Tabari gives further on a summary of the activities of the "Qarmatians", unfortunately not giving the dates of the different phases of their progress. Orders were only then given by the caliph al-Muktafī for the formation of an expeditionary force against the invaders, — on the 2nd Ramaḍān/ 31 July 903. He acted under pressure from Egypt, from whence came complaints of his inaction in the calamity. The date of the departure of the force is not stated, but already on the 15th of the same month (the 12th of August) a ten-thousand strong force under the command of Abū'l-Agharr was annihilated by the "Qarmatians" in *wādī* Buṭnān, on the Aleppo road [1]: the Bedouins surprised them as a wicked satyr a bathing nymph. The force, after a march in the temperature of the Mesopotamian August, something like 115°F., camped by a stream; the men undressed, entered the water, and were slaughtered by the attacking Bedouins in a defenceless state. A bare thousand out of the Farghāna bodyguard and others succeeded in saving themselves with Abū'l-Agharr, and fled to Ḥalab. As is also mentioned in the *Istitār*, the whole of their camp fell into the hands of the raiders. Again the two versions, from obviously different sources, completely tally with each other.

It is quite probable that Salamiyya was in fact so far spared, and the "Qarmatians" were still waiting for something. The account of Tabari (III, 2225-6) is rather obscure. After having looted different places (apparently immediately after the raising of the siege of Damascus), they went to Salamiyya, but the inhabitants beat off their attack. Ṣāḥibu'sh-shāma made a truce with them, promising safety (this is very interesting, and apparently confirms the *Istitār* version). When the inhabitants opened the gates, the "Qarmatians" entered, and started by first slaughtering all the Hashimites, of whom a number were

[1] This apparently is the same as the stream on which stands the village called Khurbatu'l-Bidjān, about 40 miles from Aleppo.

residing in the town. Then they did the same with (other) inhabitants of the place, slaughtering every one, even children, and animals, leaving none alive. Then they went on further, plundering and slaughtering people.

The account may be strongly coloured by natural sentiment, and it is quite possible that such a thing as slaughtering animals was done not out of cruelty and rage, but simply as the ordinary destruction of supplies which may fall into the hands of an approaching enemy. But it seems much more probable that the progress of destruction was not so instantaneous, as it appears at first from this summary, and that there were pauses between its different stages, as narrated in the *Istitār*.

Unfortunately Tabari does not mention the date on which it was decided to send an expedition under Muḥammad b. Sulaymān (III, 2236). Apparently it was not a regular army, but a horde of Bedouin levies, drafted from different local tribes which still remained loyal to the Abbasids, or portions of those tribes from which different sections rebelled. The general in command was given the authority to mobilise them, and local officials were specially instructed to offer him all possible assistance.

We have every reason to trust the version of the *Istitār*, seeing that the expeditionary force really moved towards Salamiyya (III, 2237), and came in contact with the "Qarmatians" at a distance of 12 leagues from Ḥamā, i.e. not far from that place. True to the *Istitār*, Ṣāḥibu'sh-shāma stays behind, with his treasury. The battle takes place on the 7th Muḥarram 291/30th Nov. 903. The leader, receiving news about the defeat of his army, flees across the desert, with only three men, and later on the party, starved and exhausted, emerges near Dāliya, on the Euphrates, and is caught when trying to obtain supplies (III, 2238) [1].

[1] No place called Dāliya apparently exists at present on the Upper Euphrates. Tabari (III, 2255) says that the Qarmatian was going to Kūfa, and approached *a Dāliya*, known as the Dāliya of Ibn Ṭawq, on the

It seems useful to offer here an abbreviated translation of the official report of the general commanding the expedition, Muḥammad b. Sulaymān, quoted in extenso by Tabari (III, 2238–2243). It is a complete account of the operations, submitted after a preliminary report, referred to in it, and contains many names of different officers, etc., whom the general recommends for a reward, and so forth.

"On Tuesday the 7th Muḥarram (the 30th Nov. 903) we marched from the locality known under the name of al-Qarwāna to another, known as al-'Ulyāna. We advanced in a state of readiness, properly formed into the centre, right and left wings. We were not long on our march when a report was brought to me that the Qarmatian infidel had sent against us one of his *dā'īs*, an-Nu'mān b. Akhī Ismā'īl b. an-Nu'mān, with 3000 horse and a number of infantry, and that they had camped in the locality known as Tamna' [1], twelve leagues distant from Ḥamā (i.e. about 16 miles), and that this force had been joined by all the garrisons stationed at Ma'arratu'n-Nu'mān, al-Faṣīṣī, and other places. I kept this information secret from officers and men. I asked the guide as to the distance between us and the place where the Qarmatians had camped, and the reply was: six leagues (i.e. about eight miles). So, relying on God, I ordered him to lead us to that place, directly; and we accordingly took that direction. As we advanced, we came in sight of the infidels, — they were already on the alert, in battle formations. Seeing our force moving towards them, they also began their advance towards us.

road along Euphrates. The word *dāliya* means water wheel. In the *Istitār* is said that he was caught at Qarqīsiyya (ancient Circessium), a place at the confluence of the Khābūr stream with Euphrates, about 20 miles South of Dayru'z-zūr. It is quite possible that this Dāliya was a small village in the same district, as may be inferred from Tabari, III, 2284.

[1] Perhaps it is the same place as "Tamania" on the maps, a village half way between the railway and the motor road in about twenty miles North from Ḥamā. If so, it appears that the Abbasid force was moving *via* Aleppo.

They had arranged their left wing in six squadrons (the names of the leaders are mentioned as they were probably ascertained later on from the prisoners), altogether about 1500 horse, and a special reserve about 400 strong. The centre was under command of an-Nu'mān himself, and others, with about 1400 horse, and 3000 infantry. The right wing was composed of several squadrons (names of the leaders are given), also about 1400 horse, and about a hundred in reserve. They began to advance rapidly against us, while we moved towards them, in whole mass, unsplit. I addressed my officers and men, promising good reward for good work."

"When we were in full view of each other, a squadron on the left wing of the enemy put their horses to the gallop, and attacked the squadron of al-Ḥusayn b. Ḥamdān, who was on our extreme right".

So he goes on, describing the battle, in which the "Qarmatians", obviously greatly outnumbered, spent their force in continuously attacking, one squadron charging immediately after the other. An enormous proportion of them fell in the battle which was very fierce. The remnants ultimately retreated, and were pursued for five leagues.

"We moved still further for about a league and a half, and halted, in order to enable the infantry and others to come up with us, fearing a ruse or an ambush from the enemy . . . We camped at the place where we halted, and, after a rest, I came out of the encampment with my officers, staying outside till morning, fearing a surprise attack. (Next morning) we started for Ḥamā, and thence to Salamiyya, because what remained of the enemy forces *were at Salamiyya with the* (*chief*) *infidel, who had arrived there three days before*". Unfortunately, this is all. The general proceeds with requests for rewards for different ranks, and promises to send the severed heads of the fallen enemy leaders.

This passage obviously implies that Salamiyya had not been ravaged three days before this report was written: if it

had been ravaged earlier, what would have been the use for the "Qarmatian" leader going there? Thus apparently the version of the *Istitār* is right again, and the slaughter of the family of al-Mahdī, with others, did not take place before the middle of Muḥarram 291/beg. of Dec. 903. The story, narrated in the *Istitār*, regarding the intention of Muḥammad b. Sulaymān, on his arrival, to punish the inhabitants of Salamiyya, and their request to send somebody to ascertain the terrible extent of the sack, apparently is not a fiction,— it tallies well with the trend of the report.

We may add that according to the *Istitār* (105) the number of the victims was only 88. After the murders the leader went to the village of Akhbiyya (or Ukhbiyya, no longer extant), and stayed there *seven* days. The forces of Muḥammad b. Sulaymān arrived *six* days after his flight. All this tallies excellently with the report. It seems that these details are based on facts: if they were fiction, based on books, the author could hardly have resisted the temptation to dramatise the narrative, by making the relief arrive just too late, etc. It may be noted, however, that the author of the *Istitār* obviously knew something about the reports sent by Muḥammad b. Sulaymān to "al-Mu'taḍid" (i.e. al-Muktafī), but it is also obvious that he had not seen the text of Tabari, because the details are different: the "Qarmatian" is caught not at Dāliya, but at Qarqīsiyya, the caliph is al-Mu'taḍid. It is also somewhat surprising that the author mentions that the captured leader refused under torture to acknowledge that he was one of the Qarāmiṭa. According to Tabari, III, 2243, he was executed on the 23rd Rab. I 291/14th Febr. 904, in Baghdād, in the most cruel way. The most remarkable detail is that only just over seventy prisoners of war could be produced for execution. To make the number more imposing, by the orders of the caliph nearly three hundred people were arrested in Baghdād, Kūfa, and other places, on suspicion of their being Qarmatians. The prisoners, despite terrible tortures, denied that they belonged to the sect (III,

2246). The Ṣāḥibu'sh-shāma, while in prison, tried to commit suicide by opening the veins with a piece of broken glass, but this was noticed, and his life was saved.

According to the *Istitār*, when the news of the "Qarmatian" having been captured had been received, al-Mahdī left Ramla, and entered Egypt. The reason, given by the author, is his fear that the "Qarmatian", out of hatred, would disclose to the Abbasid government the secrets of the propaganda. In any case, if al-Mahdī was really by the end of 292/904 already in Sijilmāsa, having passed through Egypt in the same year, his departure from Syria has really taken place after the execution of Abū Mahzūl. Reports which are found in general literature, as referred to above, about his *arrival* in Egypt, may really refer not to his *arrival*, but to his being discovered there, which, as we may also see from the *Istitār*, happened only after a considerable lapse of time. It is also possible that his decision to go to the Maghrib was prompted by the serious successes of Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh ash-Shī'ī, which had developed by this time.

Thus ended a grand enterprise which, if crowned with success, might have substantially altered the whole course of the later history of Islam, by replacing the effete Abbasid caliphate with the Fatimid in Syria. Ismaili sources, and especially the *Istitār*, clear up very many points which so far remained obscure. The picture is now perfectly clear. The movement was Ismaili, and had nothing to do with the Qarmatians of the South. It was exactly the same in nature, aims, and methods as the Berber rising in Ifrīqiyya which seven years later brought the Fatimids to the throne of the new caliphate. In fact, it was quite of the same character as many and many other Shi'ite and Messianic risings, differing from its predecessors only in the grander scale of the events: just as those, it was swiftly improvised, had a great momentum at the beginning, and fell away later. It failed, as other Shi'ite early risings failed, to attain its aims, and we can now clearly see the reasons: though probably preached for a long time, and though animating great masses

of population, it was precipitated by events, and the leaders had to act before the movement was properly organised and co-ordinated; the existing documents do not show any sign of collaboration between the settled population and the invading Bedouins, and it seems that this did not exist. Leadership was bad, apparently lacking thorough plans; in addition, the only recognised leader, Yaḥyā b. Zakariyā, was killed just at the moment when the invaders were on the point of achieving a great success. After his death the movement degenerated into what may be called a plundering occupation of a defenceless country. The brilliant and uninterrupted military successes of the invaders were obviously due to three causes: religious animation, thirst for loot, and the hopelessly bad quality both of the Abbasid military forces, and generally, of the organisation of the Abbasid state which was obviously in a desperate condition. The Bedouin rising was crushed by overwhelming forces of their own Bedouin brethren, bribed by the Abbasids. With proper leadership, and more resources, these people, most probably, would have been easily won over to the other side, and the final success of al-Mahdī obviously was not an impossibility in different circumstances.

The policy of al-Mahdī, as it appears in the *Istitār*, is remarkably "evasive". He flees from Salamiyya at the first sign of complications, and hides himself, remaining in touch with events, and with the leaders of the invaders, but apparently taking no part in the direction of the war. He apparently *never* in his life participated in any military operations, leaving these to others,— his *dā'īs*, such as Manṣūru'l-Yaman, Yaḥyā, mentioned above, Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh ash-Shī'ī, and later on his son, al-Qā'im bi-amri'l-lāh. This policy of his is perfectly consistent, from the beginning to the end.[1] In the case of the invasion of Syria he probably had many serious reasons. The cruel and rapacious sons of the desert, who ravaged and plun-

[1] Cf. above, p. 53, note 1.

dered unfortunate Syria, were hardly fit to appear as the servants of the expected Mahdī, who came to "fill the earth with justice and equity" on his behalf. Most probably he had not much trust in the good intentions of the leaders, and when the elder brother was killed, the younger, Ḥusayn, apparently did not command much prestige. He was a young man, still in his twenties, as mentioned by Tabari (III, 2219), and the *Istitār* probably rightly reflects the persistent friction between him and various parties amongst the Bedouin leaders. We can see that he makes every effort to lure al-Mahdī out of his hiding place; but the latter was certainly not so simple as to submit himself to the control, which the other would have in his hands as the commander of the army. It is quite natural therefore to find that the fulfilment of his promises of joining the army was continuously postponed, originally perhaps in the expectation of a decisive success, and later on such promises were given simply in order to placate the invaders.

Speaking of the sons of "Zakrūya", it is difficult to assess their activities properly. Undoubtedly their personal ambitions were the major moving force. But it is significant that the author of the *Istitār*, though not very friendly, nevertheless does not make Yaḥyā to be an accursed villain as his younger brother. This, perhaps, may indicate a certain recognition of sincerity, preserved in sectarian tradition, if indeed it implies anything at all. Further, in passing judgment on his brother, we must not forget that his desert ideas, and still more the ideas of his followers, could hardly boast of much refinement and mildness. It seems at least that the Abbasid caliph Muktafī with his court and government represented no great advance on this "Qarmatian" leader, as we may judge from the sickening scenes, and their accompanying sentiments, described in detail by Tabari in connection with the execution of the captured rebels, and of something like three hundred people killed merely on suspicion. It is quite possible that the atrocities perpetrated by the invaders in Syria, as reported by different historians,

are grossly exaggerated, in conformity with the general attitude of painting the "Qarmatians" in the blackest possible colours. One would naturally expect the author of the *Istitār* to make the accursed heretic, who slaughtered the family of the Imam, as horrible as possible. But he does not mention such wholesale murders either elsewhere in Syria, or in Salamiyya. Here the "Qarmatian" leader, probably in order to arouse the failing religious enthusiasm, exterminates the Hashimites (looting, of course, their property), not only as the enemies of the Imam, but also as the personal and treacherous enemies of his own army, proved by the most decisive documents. It is not only in those remote and savage days that such execution would be considered natural. The final execution of the relatives of the Imam was probably an act of revenge on his master, who, in his opinion, had failed him. Even after having committed such an atrocious act, he, Ḥusayn b. Zakariyā, still attempts to persuade the fickle leaders of the Bedouins to *wait* (p. 105), but they desert him, compelling him to flee. To wait for what?— The promised arrival of al-Mahdī, who would miraculously help him to win his cause?— But it is also quite probable that in reality the defeat of the "Qarmatians" was equally exaggerated. The report of Muḥammad b. Sulaymān, quoted above, clearly shows that the expeditionary force had great fear of an impending attack, ambush, etc. The figure of the prisoners of war, executed in Baghdad, just over seventy, is also very significant. Therefore we may safely believe that it was not so much the defeat as the psychological effect that caused the collapse. The invaders were accustomed to an uninterrupted series of successes, perhaps seeing in this the sign of Divine help, and the righteousness of their cause. Meeting with a serious setback, they at once became seized with panic, and, in the usual manner of the fickle Bedouins, deserted their leader and abandoned the campaign,— an event, which a shrewd and clever man like al-Mahdī could easily have foreseen.

There is a feature of this campaign which merits notice. Tabari gives many indications as to the two sons of Zakrūya having posed as the *Imams*, and having claimed descent from Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl. The *Istitār*, and the *Sīra* of Ja'far, are silent on this point, although, in their emphatic denunciation of the movement, it is unlikely that they would have missed an opportunity to refer to so outrageous a crime against religion. It is quite natural that the religious atmosphere of the campaign should have generated a considerable number of superstitious beliefs. Such things as the miraculously "guided" she-camel of Yaḥyā b. Zakrūya, or the mole on the face of his brother, or his mysterious sacred books, *dafātir*, which he carried with him, and was contemplating while the fateful battle at the gate of Damascus was raging, and so forth, are mentioned. Such beliefs might appear spontaneously, or even might be encouraged by the leaders. An element of "playing to the gallery" is always unavoidable if popularity among the masses is sought. But the claims to the Imamat are a different thing. These are mentioned by Tabari categorically (III, 2218), and he even quotes two letters, supposed to be addressed from and to the "Qarmatian" leader.

On pp. III, 2217-8 it is clearly stated: "Zakrūya sent his sons to them (the Kalbī clans in the Sawād of Kūfa), and they entered into an agreement and alliance with them. They (the sons of Zakrūya) claimed descent from 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib through Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl, explaining that they *were threatened by the government, and seeking for help.* The tribes believed in this. Thereafter (the sons of Zakrūya) gradually spread amongst them propaganda of the Qarmatian beliefs. None of the Kalbite clans accepted this, except for the portion (*fakhidh*) known as Banū 'Ulayṣ b. Ḍamḍam b. 'Adī b. Janāb, with their particular clients. They swore the oath of allegiance in the end of 289/902 near the tent of the son of Zakrūya, whose name was Yaḥyā, Abū'l-Qāsim, surnamed Shaykh".

. Tabari further informs us that the "Shaykh", or Yaḥyā b. Zakrūya, claimed one genealogy as follows:

Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh b. Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl;
Muḥammad b. 'Abdi'l-lāh b. Yaḥyā (?);
Muḥammad b. 'Abdi'l-lāh b. Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl;

He said that *his father*, known under the name of Abū Maḥmūd, was his *dā'ī*, preaching in support of his claims, and that he had in the Sawād, and the East, and the West, a hundred thousand followers".

Further on, III, 2225, it is said that after the death of his brother, the younger leader, Ḥusayn, assumed the name of Abū'l-'Abbās Aḥmad b. 'Abdi'l-lāh (b. Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl ?).

Still further, III, 2232, a letter, supposed to be written by him to one of his deputies, begins as follows "From the slave of God Aḥmad b. 'Abdi'l-lāh, the Mahdī, Divinely Helped, the Protector of Religion, etc." And in the reply, III, 2234, it is said: "To the slave of God, Aḥmad, the Imam, the Mahdī, Divinely Helped", etc., as discussed above, p. 47.

All this is extremely suspicious. The first genealogy is an obvious error. The second is strange: who was this Yaḥyā, whose grandson the leader pretended to be ? [1] The third is obviously absurd: if Yaḥyā b. Zakrūya was not older than forty, he certainly could not in 290 A.H. have been the *grandson* of Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl, who was born about 120 A.H. From what follows, it appears that his younger brother stuck to this version: thus if he was about 25 years old, it means that between the birth of his grandfather, and his own, 145 years have elapsed. Thus all this must be regarded as the purest nonsense, and a very crude forgery. Other details are equally absurd: his father, i.e., "Zakrūya", who thus should be 'Abdu'l-lāh b. Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl himself (who probably died in the beginning of the third/

[1] Perhaps this should be reverted, and read as: Yaḥyā b. 'Abdi'l-lāh b. Muḥammad (b. Ismā'īl) ? Thus the question arises whether "the Shaykh" was called Yaḥyā or Muḥammad.

ninth c.), was *not* an Imam, but the *dā'ī* of his own son. On the top of every thing else it is obvious that he was known very well to every one as the son of this Zakrūya, who, as every one knew, was "calling" the people not to him, his own son, but to the house of the Imams residing in Salamiyya.

It is therefore quite possible that all this consist of nothing but perverted and confused tit-bits of the Fatimid genealogy, and that the sons of Zakrūya really acted on behalf of their Imam, al-Mahdī. But, as the latter was hidden, and not known to the masses, it appeared as if they, the brothers, themselves posed as the Imams. The fact that one name is ascribed to one, and another to the other, does not prove anything: in such accounts two different versions could be easily "rationalised" into the names of two different persons. It is also not quite impossible that the name of the Imam was deliberately given in a wrong form.

Dr. B. Lewis ("The Origin of Ismā'īlism", p. 74) quotes from his new source, Thābit, who cites the *khuṭba*, recited in Ḥimṣ "*during its occupation by Yaḥyā ash-Shaykh in* 290". The *khuṭba* itself, if not fabricated,— and this seems likely,— proves nothing whatever, or perhaps, even proves that the invaders really recognised al-Mahdī as their master. But it is interesting to ascertain whether Ḥimṣ was really occupied during the leadership of Yaḥyā: the invaders hastened on the heels of the fleeing governor to Damascus, and remained busy with the siege until the death of Yaḥyā. Cf. Tabari, III, 2225; it is explicitly stated that Ḥimṣ was occupied later on.

Thus there is no serious reason to accept the information as to the sons of Zakrūya posing as Imams or Mahdīs at its face value. It is natural enough that such rumours should have been in circulation, but from the point of view of the history of Ismailism they appear so absurd that they could only be regarded as proved if we had in our hands genuinely reliable documents. Tabari accurately records the news that came to his notice. But he apparently never took any interest in Shi'ite sectarian matters,

and their intricate doctrines, and he could easily have mistaken the general term *imām*, in the sense of the religious leader, high priest, etc., for the Shi'ite term "Imām", with all its implications.

It is very unfortunate that Tabari's great Annals come to an end soon after these events, and that the last pages were hastily composed. Perhaps a proper study of the history of the Yaman will reveal the true nature of the events connected with its conquest by Ibn Ḥawshab, who, as is known, was himself regarded by his followers as a Mahdī, — "Manṣūr", according to the local terminology, though his loyalty to the Imam is beyond any doubt, and his position in the history of Ismailism is very high. We must regret very much the fact that his *Sīra* (supposed to be written by his son, or, really, grandson, Ja'far, as stated in the *Kitābu'l-Azhār*) is lost. It is strange that even the date of his death has not been preserved. We therefore cannot see clearly why the plan of the move to the Yaman should have been altered, and when this change took place.

Summing up, the picture as drawn by the *Istitār*, and completely confirmed by Tabari and other sources, if properly analysed, is such as could not have been invented, and cannot be regarded as falisified to any considerable extent. There is therefore very little reason to doubt that al-Mahdī in this story, and the historical al-Mahdī in N. Africa is one and the same person. If so, there can be equally little room for doubt as to his really being a descendant of 'Alī. If this is so, then there is nothing improbable in the supposition that he really was a descendant of Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl (because otherwise he could have claimed another genealogy for himself). Whether this is true, or not, there is an incomparably greater degree of probability in this story than in the versions which attribute to him descent from Ibn Qaddāḥ, for this at once implies events whose probability is very slight.

IV. THE FATIMIDS IN PROPHECIES.

Prophecies, foretelling different important historical events, are often a very valuable source of historical information. They do not reflect the opinions or expectations of individuals or narrow circles, but voice the dreams, aspirations, and wishful thinking of wide masses. In a Muslim atmosphere they are expressed in the form of *ḥadīths* or *akhbār* (amongst the Shi'ites) because Islamic mentality does not attach any importance to the prophesying of private individuals; only the Last and Final Prophet, Muḥammad, can be recognised as a real prophet. The Shi'ite *akhbār* are merely a variety of the *ḥadīths*, because in theory the Imams were only revealing what hidden esoteric knowledge the Prophet himself had revealed to 'Alī, who had left it to his posterity.

But although there is much similarity between general and prophetic tradition in origin and evolution, both in the Shi'ite and Sunnite environments, prophecies have peculiarities of their own. The *ḥadīth* referring to the dogmatic or legal side of the Islamic doctrine is usually a part, or element, of a certain school, or current in public opinion, created, popularised, developed, or rejected by specialists in their struggle for certain general tendencies in Islam. Contrary to this, a prophecy, by its nature, usually is individual, as concerned with individual events. It is merely an effort of the religious mentality of the masses to obtain religious sanction for their aspirations, superstitious beliefs, or political sympathies or antipathies. Its religious form is the work of more or less skilled specialists theologians, but the contents rarely come from theological circles. If in other *ḥadīths* the "pressure of public opinion" plays a considerable part, but is modified by the interference of conservative religious tendencies, in prophecies the way is wide open for additions and substantial alterations. One example

will suffice: it is quite possible that public opinion, feeling it hard to reconcile itself to the fact of the death of the Prophet, expected his return "in due course", or the advent of another religious leader of a similar standing, even immediately after the sad event, and expressed these expectations in the form of belief in certain predictions attributed to the Prophet himself. We see further how the Islamic world becomes gradually filled with expectations of the advent of the expected Messiah at the end of the first century after the death of the Prophet. Then the expectations are shifted to the end of a three hundred years' period, later on of a thousand, and so forth. How strong such beliefs could be, and how great an appeal they could make to the religious sentiment of the masses, may be seen from the fact that similar "cheques" have on many and many occasions, even in modern times, been successfully "cashed" by enterprising people. Here wishful thinking creates faith, and faith accepts as the fact that what is wished has been predicted by the source of religious knowledge, the Prophet himself.

The most valuable feature of many prophecies is the internal evidence which permits their accurate dating. Especially in different sectarian circles they are so crudely adjusted to the general *ḥadīth* style that dating does not present much difficulty, and permits the student to steal a glance at the popular mentality of the period. But, unfortunately for the historian, the same religious sentiment which helps the preservation of such information, also acts in the opposite direction. Such "too accurate" or "too concrete" predictions awake the rather dormant critical sense of theologians; and they, with full right, indeed, declare such "prophecies" spurious, retaining in standard and high class works only those which are formulated in the vaguest way. For this reason it is extremely difficult to collect such "vivid" prophetical tradition. It is scattered in the most different works, sectarian or orthodox, in the form of quotations in controversial passages, references to different subjects, and so on, but it seems that systematic collections of prophecies are extremely rare;

still more rarely are they left free from ruthless "purification", which deprives them of what from the historian's point of view would be the most valuable items.

For this reason special appreciation is due to a most interesting set of about fifty prophetic traditions concerning the Mahdī and the Fatimids, preserved in the fifteenth part of the *Sharḥu'l-akhbār* of Qāḍī Nu'mān (*Guide*, 68; cf. also above, pp. 12 and 61 sq.). As may be seen from other parts of this work, which is one of his latest compilations, the aged Qāḍī Nu'mān freely epitomized in it portions of his earlier works. It is therefore quite possible that this section is substantially based on his other compilation, the *Ma'ālimu'l-Mahdī* (cf. *Guide*, 101), which, very unfortunately for us, is lost [1].

As is known, prophecies about the Mahdī (in general) have been to some extent studied, chiefly from Sunnite sources, by different Orientalists: Snouck Hurgronje ("Der Mahdi", *Revue Coloniale Internationale*, 1886); E. Blochet ("Le messianisme dans l'hétérodoxie musulmane", 1903; "Études sur l'ésotérisme musulman", 1910); D. S. Margoliouth ("On Mahdis and Mahdism", *Proceedings of the British Academy*, vol. VII, pp. 1–21); D. B. Macdonald (article "al-Mahdī" in the third vol. of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 111–115), etc. The most accessible and handiest collection of the Shi'ite (Ithna-'ashari) tradition is to be found in the famous compendium of Shi'ite theology, the *Biḥāru'l-anwār*, by Muḥammad Bāqir b. Muḥammad Taqī Majlisī, its thirteenth volume (completed in 1078/1667; lith. Iṣfahān, 1304/1887).

In order to avoid repetition here of various general points, the student is advised to acquaint himself with the short, but very valuable article of the late Prof. D. S. Margoliouth, referred to above. For the sake of economy of space we may take it here as already known to the reader.

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[1] As suggested above, on p. 13, note 2, perhaps it is really nothing but the same fifteenth *juz'* of the *Sharḥu'l-akhbār*, treated as a separate work?

Vol. XIII of the *Biḥāru'l-anwār* presents a formidable appearance of 249 folio closely written pages. For our purposes, however, only a small portion can be used, because the whole emphasis of the work is not on the traditions regarding the Mahdī in general, but on those concerning the Ithna-'ashari twelfth Imam, whose historical reality is, generally speaking, very doubtful. Therefore only certain isolated general prophecies about the signs of the advent of the Mahdī, miraculous proofs of his mission, etc., are of any use for us. It is therefore a matter of great importance to note that even in spite of this there are numerous cases in which Ithna-'ashari traditions closely resemble Ismaili ideas. The most remarkable point, however, is the preservation of obviously "Sevener" beliefs as to the Mahdī being the *seventh* in his line of descent from 'Alī,—"*ibn sitta*", "the descendant (or successor) of six" (or "*sāb'-min-nī*", p. 35).[1]

In his collection of traditions Qāḍī Nu'mān certainly used, first of all, the well-known general *ḥadīths*, known to all schools of Muslim thought, as also those favoured by the Shi'ites. But despite the restraint and sobermindedness, so evident in his works, he has added a number of traditions emanating from devout Ismaili circles, which express the ardent expectations of those strata, concerning the Fatimids, their administrative activities, and their high policy towards the Muslim and non-Muslim world. These are especially precious as they offer us a certain degree of reliable guidance on the obscure question of the "revolutionary" activities, so often sweepingly attributed to Ismailism.

In addition to a few prophecies referring to the personal appearance of the coming Mahdī, already dealt with above, pp. 61–65, the collection may be split into three main groups:

[1] Majlisī is puzzled by the implications of this *ibn sitta*, and explains it in the sense that amongst the eleven ancestors of the (Ithna-'ashari) Mahdī there shall be six different names repeated ('Alī, Ḥasan, Ḥusayn, Muḥammad, Ja'far, and Mūsā). But this obviously is too artificial to be acceptable.

firstly, traditions concerning the descent of the expected Mahdī from 'Alī and Fāṭima; secondly, his expected activities as a theocratic ruler, who is to introduce law and order into the world in accordance with the letter and spirit of Islam; and, lastly, the aspirations of Islam to union under the sceptre of such a theocratic ruler. We may sum up each group separately, in literal translations from the *ḥadīths* or *akhbār* belonging to each group. It may be noted, however, that very often Qāḍī Nu'mān accompanies them with necessary explanations of rare words, and other comments. These may be found in the original Arabic, to which the students interested in the details may efer, but are omitted as far as possiblê here, for the purpose of implification and avoidance of superfluities.[1]

1. *The Alid descent of the Fatimids.* (No. 18). "It is lated from 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib that he once asked the Prophet: all the Mahdī be one of our descendants, or of some one else? he Prophet replied: yes, he shall be a descendant of ours. By s the religion shall be brought to completion, just as it was by us initiated. By us God shall cause the hearts (of His enemies) be reconciled after their enmity, just as by us He has smoothed he hearts of idolaters after their opposition." Qāḍī Nu'mān adds some comments, explaining that the religion (of Islam) will triumph under al-Mahdī and his descendants, so that the present order will end, and the *Qiyāmat* (religious revolution) will come under one of his successors.

(No. 19). "And it is reported from 'Alī who said that the Apostle of God said to him: al-Mahdī shall be our descendant, rom the *ahlu'l-Bayt*, or his family. God shall make him ready overnight". Qāḍī Nu'mān explains that the expression *yuṣliḥu-hu*, which can be used in different senses, does not mean that the

[1] Every tradition is here given its consecutive number in the original ext, under which it is quoted in this chapter. In order to present their ontents in a more systematic and clear form, they are here arranged gardless of their sequence in the original. The translation is literal, but vocations of blessings upon different saints, etc., are here omitted.

Mahdī will be bad, and God will make him good, but that God will make him *ready* to start on his mission.

(No. 24). "Ibn Ghassān, with proper *isnād*, relates from 'Abdu'l-lāh b. 'Abbās, amongst other matters, that the Mahdī shall be from the *ahlu'l-Bayt.* Just as God has ennobled you by sending the First one to you, so He shall make the Last one to come after the First".

(No. 34). "In a *ḥadīth* related from Qatāda who said: I asked Sa'īd (b. al-Musayyib):—is the story of the Mahdī truth? Said he: yes. And I asked: from what kind of people shall he be? He said: from Quraysh (and so on,—from Banū Hāshim, a descendant of 'Abdu'l-Muṭṭalib, from the son of Fāṭima)". Qāḍī Nu'mān adds: "and if he should ask Sa'īd, from which son of Fāṭima, he would surely have said: from al-Ḥusayn, because he mentioned this in another *ḥadīth*, as we shall see. He, Sa'īd, was not a man who related matters other than what he really heard (from the Prophet)".

(No. 35). Another *ḥadīth*, related from the same Sa'īd, who heard it from Umm Salma: "I heard the Apostle of God saying: the Mahdī shall be a descendant of mine, through my daughter Fāṭima".

(No. 38). "It is reported from Ja'far aṣ-Sādiq [1], who, through his ancestors, heard that al-Ḥusayn was asked once about the Mahdī. He said: he shall be a descendant of mine".

(No. 43). "Abū'l-Ḥārr [2] b. Furwa relates from the Prophet who said: the Islamic community shall not disappear before it possesses twelve lieutenants (of mine), all of them my descendants, each acting according to the Truth and the religion of the Right Path. Amongst them there shall be one who shall rule for forty years, and another for thirty years".

[1] Qāḍī Nu'mān, in true Arab style, always calls all the Imams by their full names; and Imam Ja'far always appears here as Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh Ja'far b. Muḥammad. Further on this abbreviation is introduced to save space.

[2] In some MSS he is called Abū Jārūd, as further on. In some other copies both forms appear together, cf. no. 45 on the next page.

(No. 42). "It is related from 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn (i.e. Zaynu'l-'ābidīn), who said: there shall come from amongst us the Qā'im [1], (i.e. the Mahdī). And after him there shall be twelve other Mahdīs" (i.e. the Imams from his progeny)".

Expressions in brackets obviously belong to Qāḍī Nu'mān. The preceding *ḥadīth* is obviously intended to sanctify the position of al-Qā'im, who was the twelfth in the line, but No. 42 obviously is a later development of the same idea, produced after the death of al-Qā'im.

(No. 45). "From what is related by ad-Da'shī, whose story comes from Abū'l-Ḥārr (or Abū'l-Jārūd ?) [2], who said: the Mahdī and seven (of his descendants) who will succeed him, will all be righteous (*ṣāliḥ*), so much so that none like them was ever heard of".

(No. 48). "Said Ṣafwān al-Jammāl: I asked once Ja'far aṣ-Ṣādiq, while being in his presence: o, son of the Apostle of God! Shall there come amongst you (i.e. the Imams) one who shall shed much blood ?— He (Ja'far) sat a while with his head bent down. Then he said: o, Thābit (*sic*), from amongst us shall come those who shall shed blood, and those who shall kindle fire, the righteous and the wise, the leaders to salvation (*hādī*) and the Mahdī (i.e. Divinely guided), the rightful Guide (*muhtadī*), and the one by whom people shall be led. From amongst us shall be the one over whose head the sun shall come down, and then rise from the place where it sets. We are the Divine family,— from us comes the Lion of God. We are Divinely appointed guardians,— o Thābit,— not the guardians of gold or silver, but of His secret wisdom. We are Divine Pillars, the treasury of God. His Prophet is our grand-father,

[1] In all these prophecies the term *qā'im* has none of the implications which it has acquired in later Ismaili literature, where it means the initiator of a new era in religion, the Qā'im of the *Qiyāmat*. Here obviously the sentence *idhā qām qā'im min-nā* means simply: when one of our progeny (*successfully*) rises in a revolt (against the present order, to uphold the purity of religion).

[2] Cf. above, note 2 on p. 100.

and 'Alī is our father. Fāṭima is our mother, and Khadīja bint Khuwaylid is our grand-mother. Ja'far aṭ-Ṭayyār, who is in Paradise [1], is our uncle; Ḥamza, the lord of the martyrs, is the uncle of our father. Who has such noble origin and descent as we have? [2] God has entrusted us with His Mystery, His inspiration, and His knowledge. He made us speakers of His wisdom [3]".

(No. 30). "It is related from Ibn Ghassān, who related from 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, who said: two men shall come from amongst us, one descending from the other. One shall be called al-Mahdī, and the other al-Murḍī (i.e. pleasing)". Qāḍī Nu'mān adds: "al-Mahdī had already come, and al-Murḍī shall come from his progeny, because 'Alī said that he, al-Murḍī, shall be a descendant of his (i.e. al-Mahdī's)".

(No. 28). "I (i.e. Qāḍī Nu'mān himself) heard Imam al--Mu'izz li-dīni'l-lāh (341–365/953–975) narrating concerning al-Mahdī. He said: once a certain important man asked him: art thou (really) the expected Mahdī, under whose authority God shall gather His slaves, making him the king of the whole earth, and shall the religion of the world become one under thee? —He (al-Mahdī) replied to him: the mission of the Mahdī is enormous. I have a considerable share in it, and those who are coming after me shall also share it. (And al-Mu'izz added): if it should be the lot of one person only, how could anything from it come to me?

Then al-Mu'izz continued: al-Mahdī was the key which opened the lock of the Divine bounty, mercy, blessing, and

[1] This obviously refers to the well-known tradition about the Prophet naming certain people as those to whom Paradise is promised. This Ja'far was one of them.

[2] This is neither undignified boastfulness, nor self-advertisement, but simply a literary device of the original compiler: imitation of "pre-Islamic" poems of contest between warriors.

[3] As the student may easily notice, the *akhbār* related from 'Alī himself and Imam Ja'far are usually lengthy, elaborate, with obvious pretence to high literary style, occasional "Bedouinization" and introduction of all sorts expressions and similes concerned with camels, etc., such as are quite rare in other *ḥadīths* and *akhbār*. Their uniformity of style suggests their common origin from a well-known early collection. It would be extremely interesting to identify it.

happiness. By him God has opened all these to His slaves. And this shall continue after him in his successors, until the promise of God which He made to them in His bounty, might and power, will be fulfilled."

(No. 5). "Ḥamza b. Ḥamrān related from Ja'far aṣ-Ṣādiq: I mentioned before him the successive Imams after the Apostle of God, one after another, ultimately coming to himself. I testified that God has made it obligatory to obey them. And when I pronounced his name, he made me a sign with his hand to be silent; and I became silent. Then he said to me: the Imams, after God has taken His Prophet, were no others than thou hast named one after the other. Then he added: and if I relate to you a prophecy (of the Prophet,— *ḥaddathtu-kum*) about a certain Imam from amongst us, concerning something that should have happened, and it in fact had not happened, it means that this shall take place under (one of) his successors".

We may add, that, as is well known, the term *mahdī* does not appear in the Coran. Prophecies concerning the Mahdī are not found in the earliest collections of the *ḥadīths*; Bukhārī does not mention any [1]. The doctrine grows gradually, and apparently becomes widespread not earlier than about a hundred years after the time of the Prophet. It appears to be considerably influenced by non-Islamic messianistic ideas, such as Christian, Zoroastrian, and Jewish. The most important development, as can be seen above, was the effort of Ismaili circles to amalgamate this doctrine with the doctrine of the Imamat, and to make the mission of the promised Mahdī not individual and personal, but a family affair,— a task carried on by several succeeding generations.

There is no doubt therefore that all these prophecies date from the end of the second/eighth c. at the earliest; and those regarding the continuation of the Mahdī's mission by his suc-

[1] Cf. Margoliouth, op. cit., pp. 8-9; Macdonald, *Enc. of Islam*, III, 112-113.

cessors are probably not earlier than the first half of the fourth/tenth c.)

2. *The Mission of the Mahdī and the Fatimids.* Exactly one-third of the prophecies collected by Qāḍī Nu'mān refer to the expectations connected with the advent of the Mahdī, either as an individual ruler, or as a dynasty of Fatimid descent, as shown above. We may consider first those which refer to the general conditions, the "new order", to be introduced in Islam. In the religious atmosphere of the time, the panacea for all ills and evils was necessarily strict enforcement of the letter and spirit of religious law: this is to be the means of filling the earth with justice even as it has been filled with injustice and oppression, and thus performing the primary and the ultimate purpose of the theocratic rule of the true successors of the Prophet, sprung from his holy progeny. Thus almost without exception these prophecies hinge on the dream of the "restoration of piety", and the unification of the religion of the world: humanity is to become one flock under one shepherd. This is rather a striking contrast to the usual idea of the "revolutionary" aspirations of Ismailism, and the silly tales of the malicious scheming of the devilish son of al-Qaddāḥ to uproot Islam, and supersede it with the "religion of the Magians".

(No. 1). Apparently an ancient tradition, cf. *Biḥār*, p. 152: "Said Abū Baṣīr: I heard Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh Ja'far b. Muḥammad (i.e. Imam Ja'far) saying: Islam started as a stranger, and shall again become a stranger that it was at the start, preached to strangers".[1]

Qāḍī Nu'mān adds: "this is a well-known *ḥadīth* related from the Prophet by many Shi'ite and Sunnite authors. In other versions it is explained by Imam Ja'far to Abū Baṣīr at his request: "A Preacher *(ad-dā'ī min-nā)* from amongst our descendants shall start a new preaching, just as the Prophet

[1] The expression *gharīb*, which is here used, implies a considerable degree of *poverty*. *Gharīb* is not so much an "outsider", as a poor, stranded man, without relatives to help him.

started his". Al-Mahdī really launched a new campaign of preaching when religious practice had become perverted, sinful innovations had been introduced, leaders of impiety had usurped authority, and even the mention of the true leaders had been discontinued,— those, the obedience to whom God made obligatory upon His slaves", etc.

(No. 2). "It is related about 'Alī that he once preached in the mosque of Kūfa [1], calling men to exert themselves for religion, and warning them against cowardice, and what it brings in its train. And when he completed his sermon, a man stepped out, and said: o, Commander of the faithful! What can affect us while thou art with us, the brother of the Apostle of God, his cousin, and son-in-law; while the banner and the standard of the Apostle of God is with us; while two grand-sons of the Prophet, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn are with us, the lords of the youths, and those to whom Paradise belongs? Even if all Jinn and all men rise against us, they cannot overpower us!

To this 'Alī replied: how can this be achieved until suffering becomes acute, until the progeny of the Prophet are humiliated and abused, and the millstone of calamity crushes you, until there shall remain in this world none but the helper to adversaries, or one who does not dare to oppose them? And when matters come to this state, then God shall send the best man in His community (or: amongst our progeny), who shall slay the tyrants in one battle after the other, until God shall be propitiated, and the people should say, the Qurayshites and (other) Arabs: by God, if only this man could be a descendant of Muḥammad the Prophet, verily he should pity us! [2]— And they shall regard as a great blessing if they could see me (again, even) for a while on the day, from which there is no escape for them.— And the man asked again: and when God shall be propitiated?—'Alī replied: God shall put mercy in his (this warrior's) heart, and he

[1] Kūfa, the mosque in Kūfa, and its *minār*, play a considerable part in mystic *akhbār* of the Shi'ites.

[2] Cf. *Biḥār*, p. 30,—the same prophecy.

shall lift his sword from them.— The man asked: and when shall this happen ?— 'Alī replied: when God shall desire this."

In his comments Qāḍī Nu'mān says that this promised warrior was al-Mahdī who has slain the enemies of God, those whom his hand reached, and his successors shall slay their successors who still remain alive, until God shall put mercy into their heart, and they shall lift their swords from them. This was revealed by 'Alī, and he never said any such things unless they had been revealed to him by the Prophet of God. This is one of the proofs of the mission of al-Mahdī.

(No. 3). "It is related from Imam Ja far that he said: when the Qā'im [1] from our family arises, he shall not make men to be pious except with his sword; and in this he shall follow the example (*sīrat*) of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib".

This tradition is apparently taken from a context dealing with some questions of divorce. In his lengthy comments Qāḍī Nu'mān explains that this refers to the fact that al-Mahdī compelled men to follow the practice of the *ṭalāqu'l-'iddat wa's-sunnat*, instead of the *ṭalāqu'l-bid'at*,— obviously the Shi'ite observances connected with divorce instead of some later simplified proceedings. He takes it as simply an example of the restoration of correct religious practice in general. And in doing this, al-Mahdī and his successors, and continuators of his work, followed the policy of 'Alī himself.

(No. 15). "From 'Abdu'l-lāh b. Mas'ūd, who heard the Prophet saying: you, people of this community, shall belong to four different parties: the first, standing for the truth,— evil shall never affect it.

Some one interfered, asking: and shall they never be attacked ?

The Prophet replied: yes, and they shall never be shattered by any great shock.— And he continued: and the second party, siding with wrong, shall always err in everything.

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[1] Cf. note 1 on p. 101.

Some one interfered, asking: but shall they offer prayers? The Prophet replied: yes. And their prayer shall be a testimony against them.— And he continued: the third party shall pursue the truth, but fall into error, violating prescriptions of the religion, as a strayed arrow shot from a bow; and they shall never return to the truth as the arrow never returns by itself backwards. And the fourth party shall always reason whether this or that is correct, but shall abide by what God wished them to abide by. Then Islam shall be near to the returning to the door from which it has entered the world.

Some one asked: to which, o, Slave of the Merciful?— The Prophet replied: to the descendants of 'Abdu'l-Muṭṭalib".

In his commentary, after philological explanations, Qāḍī Nu'mān identifies the erring party with the Kharijites, the truthful one with the Shi'ites, those against whom their prayer shall be a testimony with the Omayyads and Abbasids, and so on. The advent of al-Mahdī brought Islam to the door from which it came into existence.

(No. 17). "And 'Inān b. Ibrāhīm relates from Imam Ja'far, who said: if I would possess even a little of (secular) authority, I would pull down all the buildings between the hills of aṣ-Ṣafā and al-Marwa (in Mekka). Such a thing can only be done by a Hashimite".[1]

Qāḍī Nu'mān explains that this refers to the sacred open space, intended for the *ḥajj* ceremonies, associated with the memory of Adam. Private houses encroached on it at later periods. As the Qāḍī says, such clearing of the sacred space had not been done by his time, but shall be done soon by one of the true Imams.

[1] A somewhat similar *ḥadīth* is included in the *Biḥār*, p. 188: "said Imam Ja'far: when our Qā'im shall rise, he shall pull down to the foundation the Mekka mosque, and return it to the place on which it originally stood. He shall cut the hands of Banū Shayba, attaching these to the door of Ka'ba, under a poster: these are the thieves of Ka'ba".

(No. 20). "'Abdu'l-lāh b. Mas'ūd relates from the Prophet who said: the world shall not end until it shall be ruled by a descendant of mine, by the law revealed by God".

(No. 21). "And 'Abdu'r-Razzāq, from Abū Sa'īd al-Ḥadharī relates that the Prophet mentioned a great calamity which shall affect this community (Islam), so much that no one shall be able to find a refuge to hide himself from oppression. Then God shall send a man from amongst his (the Prophet's) descendants, who shall fill the earth with equity and justice even as it has been filled with injustice and oppression. Inhabitants of the heaven and of the earth shall be pleased with him: the heaven shall not retain even a single drop of rain unshed, and the earth shall not retain any plant ungrown, so that both the living and the dead shall be happy".[1]

Qāḍī Nu'mān explains the expression *'itrat*, progeny of the Prophet, and says that by it al-Mahdī is meant.

(No. 25). "Ibn Salām relates, through a correct *isnād* from 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, who said: there are three kinds of calamities: the calamity of excessive opulence, of excessive scarcity, and that by which men are purified as gold is extracted from the ore. This shall not cease until there comes a man from our family, progeny of the Prophet, and God shall make their task a success".

Qāḍī Nu'mān explains that "opulence" here means too much authority given to those who used it for the oppression of the progeny of the Prophet. Calamity of scarcity means inability to resist this on the part of the faithful; and the "testing of gold" refers to the circumstances of the advent of al-Mahdī when the pious received their reward after enduring hardships.

(No. 26). "Aḥmad b. 'Umar, through his *isnād*, relates from 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, who said to some of his followers when they complained on the oppression of the impious: o ye people of our following! Pray with them, participating in Friday

[1] Cf. *Biḥār*, p. 188.

prayers, and do your duty as prescribed by them. Because once discrimination arises, then comes war. We, members of the family of the Prophet, are in charge of one of the gates of Paradise. Who follows it (the Prophet's family) shall succeed, and who opposes it shall be destroyed; whosoever adheres to it, adheres to the truth. Is it not true that Islam was introduced by us, and shall be completed by us? Even if the world shall be at its last day, God, nevertheless, shall appoint to it a man from amongst ourselves who shall fill it with justice even as much as it has been filled with oppression".

Qāḍī Nu'mān adds that the expression "a gate of Paradise is with us" means that the true Imam belongs to the family of the Prophet.

(No. 27). "And 'Abdu'l-lāh b. Ḥabla, through his *isnād*, relates from 'Alī that he said: verily, Islam shall disappear from amongst people just as a frightened camel bolts from the herd; and God shall not return it back except through a descendant of ours".

(No. 31). "And it is related from 'Alī: I see your religion as if it were an obstinate (*mutawallī*) camel which wags its tail, and does not permit itself to be caught. This shall be so until God shall return it to you by the hand of a descendant of ours".

The "Bedouinization" of these two traditions obviously points to a late origin, when such camel terms, and other details of the Bedouin life, came into fashion,— probably well into the third/ninth c.

(No. 32). "And 'Alī also said: with regard to the dawn of universal love, it shall breathe in any case; even if the world shall have to come to an end the next day, God shall prolong the single remaining day of its existence in order that a man shall rule it, from our descendants. When you see this day, you shall see that no one shall shoot an arrow or stone at anybody, nor shall any one strike others with his spear. Then offer thanks to God! Be patient till its arrival if you are suffering,— reward belongs to those who fear God."

(No. 36). "Zādān relates from Salmān al-Fārsī, who said: a Qā'im shall inevitably rise from amongst the descendants of Fāṭima. He shall rise from the Maghrib, smashing the power of the heretics and slaying the tyrants".

(No. 37). "Ḥabīb b. Abī Thābit relates from Ibn Idrīs, who said: I was sitting once in a gallery of a mosque, while al-Musayyib was present. He said: I heard 'Alī saying: did not I tell you about the members of my family? Is 'Abdu'l-lāh b. Ja'far their (i.e. enemies') associate? And al-Ḥasan b. 'Alī, who is fond of feasting and eating, shall he, even being surrounded by a crowd of gluttons, neglect you in the battle if trapped as birds? Or shall not Ibn 'Abbās recite (the Coran) for you? And I myself and al-Ḥusayn belong to you, and you belong to us.

Verily everybody takes as the proof of your wickedness your disobedience to your Imam who is the true one, and compares it with their (the supporters of the Omayyads and Abbasids) obedience to their caliphs, who are the false ones; the disorder in your country, as compared with the order in theirs. Their authority over you shall last so long that there shall remain only their helpers and those who shall not oppose them. You shall be able to endure this only by adopting the tactics of the slave who obeys his master in his presence, and abuses him in his absence. Every one shall cry out, one over his religion, the other over his lost property. All that God has prohibited they shall make permitted, and their oppression shall enter every house or tent. You should offer sincere thanks if God shall forgive you then; but if you suffer, you should be patient, because the reward belongs to those who fear God!" (and so on, as in No. 32 and 1).

(No. 44). "From what Yaḥyā b. Salām used to relate from 'Abdu'l-lāh b. 'Umar, who said: be gladdened, the days of tyrants shall end soon. And after them shall come a "bonesetter", whom God Himself has appointed to set right the community of Muḥammad,— he is the Mahdī. After him shall come the

Manṣūr (Divinely helped), and after him a number of the righteous Imams".

Comments: this 'Abdu'l-lāh b. 'Umar could only have said this if he heard the Prophet himself, or heard from others who heard him,— such foreknowledge could only be revealed by God. Already al-Mahdī and al-Manṣūr came, and other righteous Imams shall come in due course.

In reading through all these traditions and prophecies, quoted above, it is easily seen that they express strong disappointment at and resentment over the general conditions in the world, and expect these to grow gradually still worse. This state of things can only be repaired by the theocratic form of government, and only a direct descendant of the Prophet can be eligible as a candidate to the high office of the head of Islam. Only he, continuing the line of the one who introduced Islam, can benefit the world by enforcing the Divine law, and himself observing it.

Qāḍī Nu'mān obviously selected only those traditions which were completely acceptable to the strict Ismaili. Yet we can easily see that, except for a few, obviously very late traditions, specially concerning the Fatimids, all these traditions can be easily classed as generally-Shi'ite. Moreover, similar longing and impatient expectations regarding the Deliverer, were widespread all over the Sunnite world: the beliefs concerning the Mahdī soon became universal, and were variously developed by the addition of different Sufyānīs, Shāmīs, Khurāsānīs, Yamanīs, etc., depending on provincial ambitions. Taken in a strict sense, all such dreams were anti-dynastic, because they implied discontent with the Abbasid rule, and a wish for revolution (to use a modern term). It is also obvious that Ismailism, sharing such popular beliefs and dreams, presented no exception, and was not even more deeply tinged in this respect than other branches of Shi'ism. Therefore there is not the slightest foundation for regarding Ismailism in this respect as a specially "revolutionary" movement.

As can be seen above, there is not the slightest trace of any "class war", or even class-consciousness, not the slightest allusion to any of those "communistic" ideals, which are from time to time "discovered" by students who supplement the scarcity of materials at their disposal with the richness of their imagination. If we have to translate the alleged "dangerous revolutionary doctrine of Ismailism" into modern terms, it would be only a peculiar religious form of constitutionalism: equity of all before the law in a theocratic state in which the necessary constitutional guarantees are found in the family tradition of the hereditary king, who, being the lineal descendant of the Apostle of God, sent by Him to reveal His religion, is Divinely protected against corruption, and abuse of his powers. If such very modest demands appeared as a "dangerous revolutionary movement" to the Abbasids, we can only imagine what were the real conditions under their rule.

No doubt, there is much exaggeration on both sides: neither was the Ismaili movement so outrageously "revolutionary", nor were the general conditions of life under the Abbasids so terribly bad as reflected in these prophecies. Most probably they were such as they were believed to be only in certain individual localities, at certain particular periods. But, as is well-known, popular psychology is never "critical" or "scientific": it goes from a few isolated striking cases, which captivate its imagination, to sweeping generalisations; and its marked feature is its pronounced pessimism: Hell, Eternal Punishment, tortures after death, the impatient expectations of the Last Day, with all the horrors which are expected to accompany it, etc., occupy the popular mind beyond all comparison more than the matters referring to Paradise and its promised bliss. It is one of the main functions of the official clergy in every religion to restore the balance by emphasising its official optimism founded on the promises of the Divine mercy, forgiveness, intercession of Jesus, Muḥammad, saints, etc.

It is also remarkable that all such dreams and expectations are concerned only with earthly matters, or, rather, one such matter only,— the enforcement of law and order. They never refer to such eschatological matters as salvation of the soul, atonement, delivery from sin. Popular psychology appears in them in quite a sober and secular strain. In Shi'itic interpretation, in which the promised Mahdī has gradually become, as we can see from these prophecies, nothing but the founder of the Alid dynasty which is to supersede all non-Alid dynasties in the Muslim world, his advent is by no means treated as the End of the World, Day of Judgment, and Resurrection. It is nothing but the longed for revolution,— purely dynastic, but neither social, nor religious. Its aim is to enforce Islam in its pure form, and in no way to upset or to abolish it.

3. *Special Political Aims and Mystic Mission of the Alids.* The prophecies mentioned above are all concerned with the general aims of the expected Alid, and particularly the Fatimid, rulers. But there are many prophecies which touch on popular dreams of wider interest relating to political affairs, or to military plans based on religious sentiment, or to various acts connected with ancient superstitious beliefs. This group of prophecies presents very great interest on account of certain historical references imbedded in them, which offer material for determining their date and the *milieu* in which they arose.

(No. 29). "Ibn Ghassān (through his *isnād*) relates from 'Alī, who said: guard your faith from these three: the man to whom God has revealed His Coran, but who, nevertheless, tries to make his own Islam, different from that revealed by God; him who neglects it, throws it away; and the man who shall draw his sword against his neighbour, accusing him (falsely) of impiety. Some people asked him: o, Commander of the faithful! And who is the worst amongst these? He replied: the one who accuses others (falsely) of impiety. Or the one who treats with contempt the *ḥadīths*, regarding these as tissues of lies, the

one who always tries to supersede a lengthy *ḥadīth* with a still longer one, thus advertising his own erudition.

Or the ordinary man, whom, by a chance, God has given authority, and he claims that every one who obeys him, obeys God, and who disobeys him, disobeys the Deity. This is a lie: no mortal can claim obedience to himself when it constitutes disobedience to God. Otherwise the millstone of authority would keep on grinding even when it has gone wrong. Contrary to this, mercy should constitute the basic force of authority. Only God can relieve it from this condition.

Is it not that the best of my descendants, and the prominent members of my family are the wisest men since their youth, and the most learned men in their ripe age? By us God breaks the difficult times, by us destroys falsehood; we are the family (of the Prophet), our wisdom comes from the wisdom of God; we listen to the Speech of Absolute Truth (*qawlu'ṣ-ṣidq*). If you follow in our footsteps, you shall be guided by our foresight, and if you stray from us, you shall perish at our hands, or as God may command.

And woe to the children of the house of the Prophet from the one who shall pose as his lieutenant, though he was not properly appointed as such: he shall slay my sons, and the sons of their sons. But, by God, even if the world would have to last but a single day, God shall prolong it until comes a man called the Mahdī, who shall fill the earth with equity and justice even as it has been filled with injustice and oppression".

(No. 40). "As it is related, in some one's book, from the Prophet, he said: I see the Omayyads on the *minbars* of the earth, ruling over you. And you shall find them vile men. Then wait for the errors committed by the fools amongst them. And when these (errors) shall multiply, they shall receive their punishment. They shall be unable to repair even a single breach ere God shall cause them another, greater one. Then shall come our Mahdī".

(No. 33). "Miḥnaf b. 'Abdi'l-lāh relates (through his *isnād*) from the Prophet, who said: the Mahdī shall be from the descendants of Fāṭima, the queen of all the women in the world Whether it shall be long, or soon, yet he shall come, to fill the earth with equity and justice even as it has been filled with injustice and oppression. Life shall become better under his rule. Curses shall be invoked upon the Omayyads and their supporters, and the prayers of God upon Muḥammad, and blessings upon 'Alī and his followers. On that day all mankind shall become true believers".

Qāḍī Nu'mān explains that this should be understood in the sense that such events are to take place under one of the successors of al-Mahdī, repeating his theory that in such prophecies the expression "al-Mahdī" refers to the whole dynasty.

(No. 41). "Yaḥyā b. Muḥammad b. Salām relates from 'Abdu'l-lāh b. Mas'ūd, who said: once the Apostle of God said to me: come along with me. We went with him, and came to a house which was full of Hashimites. The Apostle of God said to them: whoever is here present who is not a Hashimite, he should go out.— And the outsiders went away, leaving there only the Hashimites, especially those who belonged to the families of 'Abdu'l-Muṭṭalib and al-'Abbās. Then the Prophet said: O, 'Alī! Jibri'īl informed me that thou shalt be slain after my death. I tried to implore God to withdraw this decision, but He refused to do this. It is as if I appoint you (Hashimites) to be dependents of the Omayyads, who should keep you in poverty, and force upon you difficulties. Thereafter shall come the power of the Abbasids, who will act as tyrants. Woe to my descendants, to the members of my family! And woe to the Omayyads also,— they shall suffer at the hands of the Abbasids. Some of them shall flee, and stay in the remote West, acting impiously there, for a time. And then shall come out a man from amongst my descendants who shall avenge all that my descendants had suffered, and who shall fill the earth with justice (etc.). God

shall quench his thirst with a downpour from the clouds (of Divine Mercy).

Some of the descendants of al-'Abbās asked the Prophet: shall this happen while we are still living?— The Prophet looked upon them with hatred, and said: by the One in Whose hands is my life, the descendants of Persians or Romans are not so alien from me and my family as the Abbasids".

(No. 47). "Ad-Da'shī relates from 'Abdu'l-lāh b. Mas'ūd, who said: once the Prophet was sitting with his companions, when a Qurayshite youth passed by. The face of the Prophet expressed a strong emotion. Some of those present asked him what had displeased him? And he said: verily, God has given to the members of my family bliss after death in preference to the comfort in this world. After my death they shall suffer in exile, from calamities and fear, until some shall come out from here (— he pointed here towards the East—), carrying with them black banners, demanding their right which shall be refused to them. Thereafter it shall be returned to a descendant of mine, who shall fill it (the earth) with justice".

(No. 46). "Ad-Da'shī relates that the Prophet said: after my death a Hashimite shall come out, to whom the faithful shall swear allegiance (in the sanctuary of Mekka) [1] between the "corner" (i.e. the corner of the Ka'ba containing the sacred Black Stone) and the *Maqām* (i.e. *Maqām Ibrāhīm*) [2]. Four thousand (of his followers?) shall defeat the ruler of Syria, while he (the Hashimite?) shall disappear from them in the desert. Then he shall rejoin them, and the one who had deprived them of their booty shall (himself) be deprived. After this he shall reign for seven years".

This apparently refers to historical events, but is too obscure to permit of their identification. Qāḍī Nu'mān himself did

[1] As is known, special significance and importance was always attached by the Shi'ites to the claims for Imamat presented in Mekka, as the religious centre of the world of Islam.

[2] This swearing the oath of allegiance "between the corner and the Maqām" is found in other traditions, cf. *Biḥār*, pp. 179, 202.

not know what was implied. He only adds that this has not happened so far, but is certainly going to happen.

The general tendency of these prophecies is quite clear: the Fatimids were to be the successors of the Omayyads and Abbasids. Apparently these aspirations were raised by the successful turn which the affairs of the Fatimids took towards the middle of the fourth/tenth c.

(No. 4). "What had already been fulfilled, is related by Salmān al-Fārsī [1], who recollected it in connection with the Prophet, who said, referring to the Mahdī: he shall slay tyrants, exterminate heretics (*zanādiqa*), never accepting their repentance, or levying on them the *jizya* tax [2]. He shall not leave on the earth even a single man who would profess any other religion than Islam: all such he shall slay. He shall destroy the Turks and Khazars, the Daylamites and Abyssinians. Then the kings of Byzantium, wearing steel armour, shall be subdued

[1] As is known, Salmān Fārsī, together with Jābir b. 'Abdi'l-lāh al-Anṣārī, Jābir al-Ju'fī, and some other early Shi'ite saints, were specially chosen by different mystic circles as reliable authorities for their *akhbār* and *ḥadīths*. In such traditions Salmān usually appears only in connection with the most important questions, and relates directly from the Prophet. 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib usually speaks on his own behalf, and after him, as the source of mystic prophecies and revelations comes Muḥammad al-Bāqir, with his *entourage* of Jābir b. 'Abdi'l-lāh al-Anṣārī, Jābir al-Ju'fī, etc. It seems that all these are productions of the end of the third/ninth, or, better, fourth/tenth c., as may be seen from the names of peoples and countries referred to in such prophecies. Apparently no collection of such traditions, specially devoted to this kind of *akhbār*, is known, and different anecdotes are scattered in esoteric works. Nāṣiru'd-dīn Ṭūsī, in his *Rawḍatu't-taslīm* (cf. *Guide*, 642), apparently from the same sources (this time attributed to 'Abdu'l-lāh b. 'Abbās), quotes a similar prophecy, only adjusted to the political situation of his time (seventh/thirteenth c.): 'Alī shall raise his *minbar* in Cairo, capture Damascus, then go to Daylam, conquer Māzandarān, Gīlān and Mūqān, and then make war on India, China, Asia Minor, etc. (cf. W. Ivanow, "An Ismailitic Work by Nasiru'd-din Tusi", JRAS, 1931, pp. 560-561). It may be added that the *Ghāyatu'l-mawālīd*, referred to above, contains the same account of the mystic vision of Jābir, concerning the unity of the substance of the Imamat in different persons of successive generations, so vividly narrated in the beginning of the *Ummu'l-kitāb*. The extract from the 117-th *Majlis* of Sayyid-nā Ḥātim, given further on, also belongs to the same class. As to the mystic status of Salmān, see L. Massignon's "Salmān Pāk et les prémices spirituelles de l'Islam Iranien", Tours, 1934.

[2] *Jizya* is the poll-tax, paid by the *dhimmīs*, i.e. non-Muslim subjects of a Muslim state, belonging to the communities classed as the *ahlu'l-kitāb*.

to him; and he shall not leave a single Jew or Christian who shall not be made a *dhimmī* [1]. He shall cause all the people to join the religion of Abraham and Muḥammad".

(No. 7). "Zādān related from Salmān al-Fārsī, from what he knew from the Prophet, who said: there shall in any case rise a descendant of Fāṭima, from the Maghrib. He shall slay heretics (*zanādiqa*), and conquer the Turks and Khazars, the Daylamites and Abyssinians. And then he shall have success against the kings of Byzantium, armoured in steel plates. And there shall be no other banner (in the world) except for the banner of the (true) faith".

This prophecy, attributed to the Prophet who confided it to Salmān al-Fārsī, permits of correct dating,— the middle of the fourth/tenth c. It names all the powerful rivals of the Fatimids: the Turks who began their move from Central Asia; the Khazars, a Turkish people who for a short time only in the tenth c. A.D. formed a strong kingdom on the Northern shores of the Black Sea; the Daylamites, i.e. Būyides, who first made their appearance in 320/932, and then rapidly encroached upon the Eastern provinces of the Abbasid caliphate; Abyssinia, of no importance to any part of the world, except Egypt and the Yaman, with which the Fatimids had close ties; and lastly the "steel armoured" kings of Byzantium, as a general term for Europe. Thus this tradition, in both its versions, is an excellent specimen of the expectations which the rising Fatimid dynasty evoked in their subjects.

(No. 6). "And like this is related by al-Ḥasan b. Maḥbūb, from Imam Ja'far, who said: when a descendant of ours shall rise (as the Imam or caliph), he shall offer every anti-Shi'ite to adopt the Shi'ite persuasion. If they sincerely adopt it, they shall live; otherwise they either shall be executed, or reduced to the state of the *jizya*-paying subjects, like the *dhimmīs* of to-day.

[1] *Dhimma* is the *ahlu'l-kitāb* community, paying the *jizya* poll-tax, mentioned above, note 2 on the preceding page.

Despite of their tears, he shall expel them from the cities to the rural localities".

This, as Qāḍī Nu'mān adds, has not yet happened under the Imams, i.e. successors of al-Mahdī, but shall be enforced in the future, when they grow stronger. Then religion shall be one all over the world, as God has promised it.

(No. 8). "As related by ash-Sha'bī, from Ḥudhayfa b. al-Yamān, who remembered that the Prophet said: none can conquer Bulanjar, the mountains of Daylam, and Constantinople, except a Hashimite".[1]

Qāḍī Nu'mān adds: the "Hashimite" here means the Imam of our time, a successor of al-Mahdī.

(No. 9). "And, in the same strain, according to ash-Sha'bī, who said that he was informed by Malik b. Ṣaḥḥār al-Hamdānī, who said: we fought under Bulanjar in the caliphate of 'Uthmān in a hand to hand fight. My brother was wounded, and I took him out, carrying him on my shoulders. We got out, and I was moving when a man overtook me, and struck me on the back with a whip which was in his hand. I turned towards him,— and lo, it was Ḥudhayfa al-Yamānī. I greeted him, and he asked me as to who it was in my hands. I replied that he was my brother: have you not seen what we suffered in our fight? I nevertheless hope that we shall be victorious in the future, if God pleases.— And Ḥudhayfa replied: only a Hashimite shall conquer Daylam, Bulanjar and Constantinople. By the Hashimites has God started the religion, and by them He shall bring it to completion. And with regard to what has been conquered, and what is being conquered now, all these different places,— they must be conquered finally by the one after whom there shall be no other religion than Islam".

[1] Constantinople invariably figures in such prophecies, both accepted by the Sunnis and the Shi'ites. Cf. *Biḥār*, p. 188:— the Qā'im shall destroy four mosques in Kūfa, shall conquer Constantinople, the hills of Daylam, etc. Cf. also Margoliouth, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

(No. 16). "It is related from Abū Ṣādiq that he once heard a man saying: al-Muhallib has conquered Tabaristan. And he said: Ḥudhayfa related from the Prophet that he said: only a Hashimite shall conquer Tabaristan, Daylam, the town Bulanjar, and Constantinople".

Qāḍī Nu'mān explains that the meaning of victory is complete and final subjugation and conversion of the inhabitants. Not only are the enemies to be ruined, but no mention of them even is to remain.

(No. 10). "From the story of Wakī' b. al-Jarrāḥ, that the Prophet said: verily, Constantinople shall be occupied, and (the seizure of) their prince shall make happy the (Muslim) prince, as the (seizure of their) troops shall make glad these troops. After this Constantinople shall never be seized again".

Qāḍī Nu'mān adds: this refers to the present Imam, descending from the Prophet.

If such prophecies really reflect the rumours spread in the bazars of the Middle East, the Crusaders, even without the fanaticism and religious exaltation, attributed to them, had good reasons to take the initiative and to attack before being attacked by the gradually growing Fatimid empire.

So far all the traditions have reflected ideas regarding the purely secular functions of the Fatimids. Let us now see what popular superstition expected from them in purely religious sphere.

(No. 22). "It is related by ash-Sha'bī from Tamīm ad-Dārī, who said: never did I enter a town more pleasant to me than Antioch. The Prophet of God said of it: fragments of the Tables of Moses, the table and the chair (*minbar*) of Solomon, and the staff of Moses are concealed in one of the caves in the vicinity of it. Not a single cloud, from the East or West, North or South, shall pass over that cave without raining its blessing on it, out of respect for what it contains. But not many days and nights shall pass before it shall come into possession of a descendant of mine, whose name shall be like my name, and the name of his

father like that of mine. He shall resemble me more than anyone, both physically and morally".

(No. 23). "Muḥammad b. Salām related through others from Imam Ja'far, who said: when one of our descendants shall become the Imam (or caliph), he shall go to Antioch, and bring out from the cave there the Torah, together with the staff of Moses, and the Stone (?)".

(No. 39). "Sharīk b. 'Abdi'l-lāh relates from Jābir al-Ju'fī, who related from Imam Ja'far, who said: when our descendant, of the family of the Prophet, shall become the Imam (or caliph), he shall punish or reward the wicked and the good amongst the creations of God. Who shall obey him, shall obey God, and who shall rebel against him, shall rebel against God. He shall bring out the Torah, the Gospels, and other Divine books in Antioch. And he shall rule over the followers of the Torah according to their Torah, the people of the Gospels according to their sacred book, and the people of the Coran according to their Coran. Then the earth shall disgorge its treasures of gold and silver [1]. And he shall say to the people: hey, you, come on, and take all this, for the possession of which you have shed so much blood, ruining so many families.— And he shall give the people what none had ever given before him, and shall never give after him. His name shall be like the name of the Prophet. He shall fill the earth with justice even as it has been filled with injustice and oppression".

(No. 49). "It is related from Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. 'Alī (i.e. Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir) who said: when a descendant of the Prophet shall become a caliph, the staff of Moses shall be brought, and he shall take out the Torah from Antioch. God shall then take fear from the hearts of the Shi'ites, and put it into the hearts of their enemies, strengthening the hearts of

[1] This is in obvious contradiction with the dreams of "one flock and one shepherd"; therefore it is quite probable that this *ḥadīth* is of a much earlier origin, long before the rise of the Fatimids. It is also found, in a different version, in the *Biḥār*, p. 188.

his followers as with iron bars. It shall be so that if he shall summon some one, and behead him, and the people shall inquire as to the reason of his execution, (they shall find that) this was really deserved according to his actions".

The last four traditions clearly show the influence of Jewish beliefs connected with the promised Messiah, and the fact that such dreams were shared by early Ismailism is remarkable.

In the traditions collected here one particular feature is noteworthy: absence of references to the miracles which the expected Mahdī should work, according to all-Islamic beliefs, as the proofs of his Divine mission. Qāḍī Nu'mān has not overlooked these. But it is significant that he refers to not a single ancient *ḥadīth* on this subject, adding at the end of the fifteenth part of his *Sharḥu'l-akhbār* a paraphrase of the corresponding pages in his earlier work, the *Iftitāḥu'd-da'wa* (cf. above, pp. 6-7), about the miraculous proofs of Divine help in his extraordinary career. In addition to this, he skilfully exploits his theory of "the Mahdī" implying not a single individual, but a dynasty. Thus in every case where popular belief expects something superhuman to be done by the Mahdī, he can distribute the burden between several Imams, or postpone the act for performance by his coming successors.

Undoubtedly this collection, selected by Qāḍī Nu'mān, bears the stamp of his own individual peculiarities: sobriety, and moderation in religious sentiment, which in different degrees are also noticeable in the works of many other early Ismaili authors. But, nevertheless, the spirit of the prophecies quoted by him, independently of his style, reveals interesting traces of the mentality of the masses of that period. It shows definite signs of religious exaltation similar to what in the modern world would be a high tide of patriotic sentiment in a nation at the initial stages of a popular war: dreams are connected with definite aims, with removal of definite grievances, and with quite positive and practical ideals to be achieved. The Ismailis considered themselves as the spear-head of active Islamic thought, aiming

at the achievement of the unification of all Islamic and non-Islamic peoples in one world empire, under one divinely guided head, who would be able, at last, to introduce and maintain a blissful state of social equality and eternal peace in the world. Religion here is the tool, and not the aim: the aim is purely secular. Piety appears to be here nothing but the supreme social virtue, as the source of discipline, and not a means only of gaining supernatural rewards after death. All early Ismaili works are to some extent full of the same spirit, which later on gradually disappears.

But this spirit has nothing to do either with "revolutionary" aspirations, or more particularly with any sort of fictitious design "to uproot Islam, and to introduce the religion of the Magians". In many respects the earlier Fatimid period, with its remarkable cultural efflorescence, has features in common with the incipient stages of the Renaissance age which appeared much later on in Europe. The calamities which befell Islam so soon after this time stopped the process, and annihilated all its achievements.

It can easily be seen that precisely this spirit of Ismailism was to a great extent the cause of its ruin. This came from quite an unexpected source — the Crusaders. The chronic struggle against them drained the strength of the Fatimid empire. The acts of al-Ḥākim in his attempts at suppressing Christianity were probably not insane, but a direct outcome of this mentality of the masses,— a move towards the realisation of their ideals. This is why such eminent intellectuals as Ḥamīdu'd-dīn Kirmānī, and others, could sincerely defend him, and their less balanced colleagues even find in these actions of his a reason for deifying him, as the Druzes did. Many of his exploits were nothing but the materialisation of the similar dreams of the masses, carried out with maniacal ruthlessness. It is quite possible that his intentions were excellent, from purely religious point of view. But the mistake was committed in an underestimation of the powers outside. The Fatimid empire was still too weak to think seriously of the "crushing of the Turks and Khazars, the Dayla-

mites and the Abyssinians", and, in addition, of provoking the "clad in steel armour" kings of Byzantium, or, generally, Christian Europe,— and to do this even before having crushed their deadliest enemies, the Abbasids. The latter could only generate hatred, and pour lies upon their opponents, but were powerless to stir up public sentiment for a decisive act, while in the case of the Franks the aggressive ideology of such "pan-Islamic" dreams evoked a similar ideological reaction of an opposite character.

In the light of the general ideas of Ismailism, as a heterodoxy, the claim of the Fatimids to be the champions of the cause of Islam on a world scale sounds strange. But this is entirely an illusion, created by centuries of propaganda. As a drop of water possesses the properties of all the waters of the ocean, so this small collection of prophecies clearly manifests the same fact as can be observed by the study of the original Ismaili sources: in its early stages, when it really was the religion of masses,— long before it became the secret esoteric faith of a small sect in the Yaman, and other remote corners of the world,— there was little difference between what is treated as "orthodoxy" in Islam, and Ismailism.

A critical examination of the facts shows that except for the central theory of Imamat, the difference between both theologies was chiefly terminological. There was little difference between Ismailism and other schools in the forms of worship and law (*sharī'at*), in any case no greater difference than is found between principal orthodox schools. What in Sunnism, with its historically cultivated secularistic tendencies, was the sphere of the *ijmā'*, *qiyās*, and *ra'y*, i.e. consensus of public or expert opinion, or deduction by analogy, was in Ismailism, with its theocratic tendencies, called *ta'wīl*, in continuation of the tradition of the Coran itself. As we have seen elsewhere, the evolution of religious philosophy in Sunnism and Ismailism was so identical that even the difference in terminology cannot disguise the fact. And just as in Ismailism there were circles

which emphasised mystical and esoteric life at the expense of formal worship, so also it was in many branches of the very powerful Sufic movement, whose orthodoxy in the majority of cases was beyond dispute. Thus the idea of the heterodoxy of Ismailism is a matter of the point of view. The well-known stories of the Ismaili propaganda spread by the vile insinuations of the *dā'ī* to the "victim", who is intrigued by the promises of the revelation of all sorts of philosophic theories and impieties, obviously is one of the numerous mediaeval fictions. Just as nobody can believe that orthodox Islam was spread by any craving on the part of the neophytes to understand the contents of the most abstruse treatises of Ghazālī and other philosophers of Islam, so obviously the esoteric treatises of the Ismailis played no part in propaganda. Ismailism was undoubtedly spread in a non-Islamic *milieu* exactly in the same way as other schools of Islam, and amongst the Muslim masses by simply accepting from the new converts the recognition of the "rights of the House of the Prophet". The circles supporting the Abbasids deliberately ignored this, and had to resort to the invention of fictions in order to explain what, if we take such fictions seriously, we should have to regard as the superhuman successes of Ismaili propagandists.

V. THE MYTH OF 'ABDU'L-LĀH B. MAYMŪN AL-QADDĀḤ.

1. *The Genesis and Evolution of the Myth.*

Every student of Ismailism is familiar with the monograph of de Goeje, " Mémoire sur les Carmathes du Bahraïn et les Fatimides" (Leiden, 1886). I am sure that many of those who have seriously studied it have found it extremely difficult to follow the author through the first sixty pages, in which he discusses the origin of Ismailism and of the Fatimid dynasty. With his remarkable erudition and industry he collected much of very valuable and important information. But, in spite of this, the student does not feel firm ground under his feet: everything trembles in an atmosphere of the unreal, of theories, inferences, guesses and presumptions, none of which in the least convincing. Later researches have revealed the cause of this: de Goeje in his theories is chasing a phantom, the shade of 'Abdu'l-lāh b. al-Qaddāḥ who died a hundred years before the events with which he is concerned.[1] This error persistently leads him astray, and causes endless mistakes in his interpretation of his materials.

As has already been suggested on p. 76, the theory that 'Abdu'l-lāh b. Maymūn al-Qaddāḥ was "the first man who" taught Ismaili doctrine, and, it may be for this very reason, was the progenitor of the Fatimids, is apparently of a late origin; and it seems quite probable that this "discovery" was made not earlier than the first half of the fourth/tenth c., by Ibn Razzām, from whose work it spread everywhere. It is also quite probable that although there were many eminent early

[1] The first scholar who traced the historical identity of Ibn al-Qaddāh in the Ithna-'ashari sources was the late P. Casanova ("Une Date Astronomique dans les Epîtres des Ikhwan as-safa", JA, 1915). L. Massignon, in his subsequent works, entirely sided with him.

Shi'ites who were connected with those groups from which Ismailism sprang, al-Qaddāḥ received preferential treatment for the sake of his name: most probably he was discovered to be the *real* successor of Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl, instead of the son of the latter, 'Abdu'l-lāh, who was born in the period when the Imam, living in hiding, could not be known anywhere except in the narrow circle of the devout sectaries.

'Abdu'l-lāh b. Maymūn al-Qaddāḥ al-Makkī, an associate of Ja'far aṣ-Ṣādiq, is a shadowy figure, regarded by the later Ithna-'asharīs of the fourth and fifth c. A.H. as a somewhat unreliable *rāwī*, inclined to extremism, but on the whole acceptable. Nothing is known about his biography, and only a few lines are devoted to him in Ṭūsī's List (197), and in Kashī's *Rijāl* (160 and 247, the same passage).[1] Apparently simply a pious man of no importance outside the narrow circle of his colleagues, mystics and fanatics like himself, he obviously played no part in historical events. The date of his death is not known. Jawbarī, in his *Kashfu'l-asrār*, says that he died in prison in Kūfa about 210/825, as mentioned by L. Massignon, "Esquisse d'une Bibliographie Qarmaṭe", p. 331. But this is obviously too late: he was certainly not less than thirty at the time of the death of Imam Ja'far, in 148/765. Most probably something like 160–180 A.H. is much nearer to the truth. He was apparently in touch with the Khaṭṭābiyya circles, and some other extremists, but we have not the slighest indication as to whether he shared their ideas, or held other beliefs, of his own. Putting it in mathematical terms, historically he is a quantity next to zero.

[1] Tusi's List, and the commentary, contain nothing but the name: 'Abdu'l-lāh b. Maymūn b. al-Aswad, *mawlā* ("client") of the family of Banū Makhzūm; the author of a book (title is not mentioned). Kashī (pp. 160 and 247): "On 'Abdu'l-lāh b. Maymūn al-Qaddāḥ al-Makkī: Ḥamdūya related to me from Ayyūb b. Nūḥ, and he from Ṣafwān b. Yaḥyā, and the latter from Abū Khālid, who related from 'Abdu'l-lāh b. Maymūn, who mentioned that once Abū Ja'far (peace be upon him!),— i.e. Imam Muhammad al-Bāqir,— asked him: o, son of Maymūn! How many of you there are in Makka?— And I replied: we are four.— And he said: you are the light in the darkness, prevailing on the earth".

As collected by B. Lewis ("The Origins of Ismā'īlism", 63-64), Ithna-'ashari information about 'Abdu'l-lāh b. Maymūn is very meagre. As we have seen, the earliest source, Kashī, regards him as already a man of a certain repute under Muḥammad al-Bāqir, who died *ca.* 114/732, while Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl, as has been shown, was *born* not earlier than 120/738. Thus 'Abdu'l-lāh b. Maymūn was at least by 30–35 years his senior. It follows that any theories based on various late non-Ismaili sources as to his having been *adopted as a son* by Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl, spiritually or in any way whatever, and as to his having succeeded his "spiritual father", are un-deserving of any serious attention. and must be regarded as mere fairy tales (contrary to B. Lewis, *op. cit.*, p. 49).

This very same 'Abdu'l-lāh b. al-Qaddāḥ, who most probably died some time between 160/776 and 180/796, unexpectedly develops his superhuman activities exactly a century after his death. As carefully deduced by de Goeje from reliable general histories, he died just about 286/899,— apparently for the second time (p. 21). Just as there are hundreds of versions of the genealogy of the Fatimids, found in different historical works, so, exactly in the same way, there are as many versions of how the malicious son of Qaddāḥ committed his swindle. The "classical" version is that he was a Persian [1] who wanted to blow up Islam from the inside; he decided to harness the Shi'ite sentiment of the masses, invented in the second half of the third/ninth c. his impious doctrine, leading to atheism and moral turpitude, and, under the flag of the sect of Ismā'īl b. Ja'far, which had

[1] Apparently there are no authentic reports as to his real nationality, and it is more than doubtful whether he was a Persian. As is known, anti-Ismaili authors make him a grandson of Bardesanes, a gnostic of the fifth c. A.D. Sayyid-nā Idrīs, in his *Zahru'l-ma'ānī* (in a passage given in a translation, Texts, p. 47), enters so deeply into the spirit of these stories that he even concocts for him a genealogy from Salmān al-Fārsī. That this is nothing but a crude falsification, is obvious from the wild names which he mentions. But though there is no "documentary justification" for the view that he was a Persian, a large volume would be required to reprint all the learned theories about a Persian nationalistic movement, Persian intrigue, and what not, in Ismailism, which have all been built on this unverified statement.

become extinct long ago, succeeded in starting a powerful mass movement, which ultimately brought to the throne of the caliphs his son or grandson, 'Ubaydu'l-lāh, posing as the expected Mahdī.

This story was so often repeated that it has become a part of "general knowledge". But as it cannot stand the slightest touch of criticism or historical analysis, various scholars, from the middle ages to the present time, have tried their hands at mending it. In the complete absence of facts there was a vast field for theories, based on various religious doctrines which came into existence only at a much later period, or simply on imagination. There is just as much ground for the belief that this 'Abdu'l-lāh was adopted as a son by Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl (who undoubtedly was younger than himself), or that he succeeded him in accordance with the mystical doctrine of *tafwīḍ*, as an Imam, as for the plain and simple belief that he fraudulently usurped the Imamat, as also did his descendant al-Mahdī. All such theories are utterly misleading and harmful, as digressions from the path of sound research.

There is one remarkable fact worth noting. We have numerous proofs that many mediaeval historians had access to genuine Ismaili dogmatic and historical works; but they never explored them properly, or took advantage of the opportunity afforded by their perusal for a better understanding of Ismaili doctrine or historical evolution. What is still more remarkable, the same thing is repeated in modern times, among learned orientalists: they do not spare themselves enormous labours in order to collect the crumbs of misleading and erroneous information from hundreds of obviously biased and incompetent works, but completely disregard even those genuine Ismaili works which are in their hands, not to speak of making any serious effort to obtain more of them. This is the amusing situation of Mahomet crawling away from the mountain, while the mountain pursues Mahomet.[1] De Goeje (pp. 169-70) devotes

[1] Cf. above, p. 2.

only a few lines to one of the most important esoteric works in Ismaili literature, (apparently) the *Ta'wīlu'z-zakāt*, by Ja'far b. Manṣūri'l-Yaman (cf. *Guide*, 40 and 45; MS in Leyden, 1971), which he had in his hands. Although any amount of rubbish has been written since his time, apparently not a single student has taken any interest in this work. The same thing fully applies to the important collection of genuine Ismaili MSS described by E. Griffini in the ZDMG, 1915, pp. 86–88, and to a still more interesting collection purchased about ten years ago by the School of Oriental Studies, London, and noted by A. S. Tritton (BSOS, 1933, pp. 33–39). It is one thing to indulge in fantastic speculations, and quite a different thing to approach life, or religious doctrine, as it really is, with all its complexity, technicalities, long tradition, and great difficulties, which can only be overcome by serious study, sustained effort, and sober reasoning, and which so effectively damp the enthusiasm of the seekers after the theatrical "impieties" or "revolutionary" attitudes, invented by the lying fantasies of anti-Ismaili and generally anti-Shi'ite propaganda.

Looking at the matter critically and soberly, we can come to only one inevitable conclusion, regardless of whether the Fatimid version and tradition is true or false: there is no doubt whatever that in the stories of 'Abdu'l-lāh b. Maymūn al-Qaddāḥ we have a *myth*, probably, as all myths, accidentally born, and as accidentally developed into a complex theory. It has all the features of a real myth: 1. a gigantic span of life attributed to the hero; 2. a gigantic underground plot and conspiracy; 3. a gigantic fraud; and 4. a gigantic impiety of doctrine.

1. It is obvious that the real 'Abdu'l-lāh b. Maymūn al-Qaddāḥ had little or nothing to do with the matter; and even if he preached any particular doctrines, these have undergone a long and thorough evolution through more than a hundred years of the rapid growth of the sect. Nothing belongs to him in the myth beyond his name, accidentally misappropriated by anti-Shi'ite propaganda. The impious son of al-Qaddāḥ of the

myth is nothing but the *collective idea of the supposed activities of the Ismaili headquarters just before the triumph of al-Mahdī.* His name obviously covers the ancestors of al-Mahdī just as much as other eminent Ismaili leaders. It is perfectly possible that different historical reports of this ʻAbdu'l-lāh, or his "sons", living in Ahwāz, ʻAskar Mukram, Kūfa, Baṣra, Ṭāliqān, Salamiyya, etc., and coming in contact with Qarmaṭ, various Dindāns, secretaries of different princes, etc., are quite true. But in every particular case the name of ʻAbdu'l-lāh covers a different Ismaili leader. Ibn al-Qaddāḥ becomes re-born at the time of the great intensification of the activities of the Ismaili headquarters, and when matters come too near to the light of history, he "dies" (for the second time), leaving the scene to his "sons".[1]

2. The *gigantic plot* and *terrible conspiracy*, which outdo Arabian Nights in their fantastic details, are nothing but a symbol of the enormously widespread Shiʻite movement, which was merely a name for the discontent rampant in the Abbasid state, and the popular hatred of the dynasty. The Shiʻite "conspiracy" really took two hundred years to mature, and to produce in the end an effect on a large scale. What is credited to the malice of the impious Ibn al-Qaddāḥ is in fact no more than the final stage in the process. What really remained to be achieved by the Fatimids was nothing but what we may call "mobilisation" of the available forces. If it is true that the mission of Ibn Ḥawshab in the Yaman started from absolutely nothing in 266/879, the fact that the whole of the Yaman was conquered by him by 293/905, shows that this stage took an unbelievably short time to achieve. The "mobilisation" of the Bedouin tribes in the desert between Syria and Mesopotamia in 289/902 probably took only a few months. The enormous

[1] Taking both the plain historical reports, and also the Ismaili tradition, we cannot see any dominating central figure at this period who could be identified with this super-man of the myth. Surely, if such a man had existed, and had played even in a small degree a part similar to that of the Ibn al-Qaddāḥ of the myth, he would have left clear traces in history.

successes of Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh ash-Shī'ī in North Africa probably took not more than ten years. In the slow tempo of life and communications at that time we cannot believe that the propaganda of the *dā'īs* was anything beyond the revelation of the fact of the existence of the real Imam, the direct descendant of 'Alī, who was qualified to take up arms against the Abbasid government, and introduce a new order, securing safety, justice, and relief from the unbearable burden of taxation

The accounts of Nuwayrī and others, giving the notorious scale of "initiations", with gradual revelations of impious mysteries, are obviously nothing but a perversion of the idea of the doctrine concerning the *ḥudūdu'd-dīn*, which had in reality nothing to do with these stories, and especially with their interpretation in the spirit of the masonic lodges of the beginning of the XIXth c. When de Sacy and others first discovered information about these "degrees", they rather credulously suggested a parallel with masonic lodges; but the only parallel that is suitable is the mediaeval Papacy, and the organisation of the Roman Catholic church [1].

3. The *gigantic fraud* perpetrated by the vile Ibn al-Qaddāḥ was indeed remarkable: his father Maymūn, and himself, were closely associated with the family of the Imams, al-Bāqir and his son Ja'far aṣ-Ṣādiq. In that semi-patriarchal atmosphere, in a small group of devout people, all were well-known to each other. How, then, this well-known 'Abdu'l-lāh could "pose" as the son of Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl,— defies comprehension. Yet he is not only supposed to have succeeded in this, but he and his "descendants" for over three hundred years are supposed to have continued to dupe millions of their followers, by posing as the Imams. All this went without a hitch, and only the friends of the Abbasids found out the truth. But when, how, and under what circumstances this was done,— this they did not think deserving of publicity.

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[1] All matters concerning the organisation of the Fatimid propaganda are discussed in my paper on this subject in the JBBRAS, 1939, pp 1–35.

4. The *gigantic impiety of the doctrine.* On examining different accounts of the nefarious doctrine, maliciously invented by Ibn al-Qaddāḥ to seduce the Muslims, and on analysing its elements, we can see without any difficulty that it is in reality a picture of a very late and advanced phase of the Fatimid doctrine, but completely misunderstood, reflected in the distorting mirror of their opponents' propaganda, and flooded with ideas derived from popular, "bazar" rumours. Such accounts yield only distorted and twisted fragments of the whole, and contain nothing novel, no elements which the Fatimids "concealed", or "expunged". Wild theories about fantastic "revolutionary" doctrines of the "original Qarmatian phase", etc., found in many learned works, are all a product of imagination.

Ismaili tradition, as seen in the available literature, is extremely tenacious and unyielding in its conservatism, preserving in a mummified form traces of remote antiquity, as, e.g., in the case of the doctrine about "seven Imams", etc. It is therefore reasonable to expect that if there really had been any "revolutionary" theories in an early phase of the doctrine, traces of these would be visible. But in fact there are apparently no such traces. There is much looseness in the application of such terms as "revolutionary", so that very often it is impossible to see what is really aimed at: revolution in *religious* doctrine, or in *social* matters, or also *anti-dynastic* movement. With regard to any religious "revolution" a student dealing with the history of Ismailism must never for a moment forget the religious mentality of the authors of his sources, to whom every minute alteration in dogma, in technicality or worship, and so on, would appear as the sign of "*ilḥād*", "perversion of the true faith", and "revolution against Islam". The element of anti-dynastic revolution is inseparable from early Shi'ism in so far as it claimed the right of Imamat (or caliphate, which is the same idea in Shi'ism) for the descendants of 'Alī only. With regard of social revolution, there is no trace of such a thing: the fight was not *against* existing social institutions but *for their support* and proper

enforcement. In exoteric or esoteric works of Ismaili literature, as it exists, there are no apparent traces, it seems, of ideas which would support the accusations of communistic tendencies, or such modern ideas as "class war", etc. It is quite possible that in some small communities, drawn together by common danger and isolation, the style of life may have been reversed in such a way as to resemble patriarchal conditions. But all the ingenious identifications of Mazdakite, Khurram-dīniyya, or other ideas in the doctrine are pure imagination: the authors obviously had no knowledge of these early sects, except for the same "bazar" talk, as in the case of the Ismailis whose beliefs they wanted to explain. It is quite obvious that Ismaili headquarters were making full use of the strong and widespread discontent of the masses, promising them relief. But what they aimed at was a *theocratical* state, ruled by religion, on the lines of the mediaeval Papacy at the time when it possessed or claimed secular authority,— and not a communistic republic.

Speaking of "Mazdakite" and "Khurram-dīniyya" beliefs, it is easy to find in every account of Ismailism by its opponents allusions to the sect holding the beliefs of the Zoroastrians or Manichaeans, of the Christians, and even of the *Dahriyya*. Hence come all sorts of theories as to Ismailism being a kind of syncretism, a "hotch-potch of religions", etc. When properly analysed, quite a different picture is revealed. It would be really surprising if in the system of what may be called "super-monotheism" which is Fatimid Ismailism, with its ruthless elimination of every idea interfering with the notion of the Absolute Oneness of God, there should be at the same time genuine Dualistic beliefs. The source of the misunderstanding is, however, clear. In the philosophic foundation which they so laboriously laid to reinforce the Coranic inspiration, they used the only available and up-to-date philosophy of the time,— Aristotle with Plato as seen through the eyes of late commentators of the Plotinian school. Here they found what suited them very well: the idea of the Absolute Supreme Deity, transcending

human knowledge, and revealing Itself through a chain of gradual emanations. The highest emanations, immediately below the Deity itself, were quite popular in Islamic philosophical speculations as *'Aqli Kull* and *Nafsi Kull*, the "Universal Reason" and "Universal Soul", as these are usually (quite inaccurately) rendered in English. In their attempts at evolving a terminology better fitted to abstract speculations, they introduced such terms as *al-Mubdi'u'l-awwal* and *al-Mudbi'u'th-thānī*, instead of these, i.e. the "First Creative Principle" and the "Second Creative Principle". This was obviously quite sufficient ground for accusations of their believing in two Creators, i.e. two Gods, and therefore following the doctrine of Mani, Zoroaster, Indians, from which come theories of "Persian influences", and expectations of finding in their secret works almost a complete library of Mani's compositions. The same thing holds good equally for the accusations not only of *zandaqa*, but also *tanaṣṣur*, i.e. Christianising, because the same set of terms, with the addition of the third *Mubdi'*, is taken as an incorporation of the doctrine of the Trinity, as Muslims understood, or rather misunderstood it. And the same thing leads still further: some Ismaili authors prefer to use instead of the still somewhat "personal" term *Mubdi'* an impersonal *Ibdā'*, "Creative act", which becomes in the hands of their enemies a "positive proof" of their not believing in a God at all, and of their recognising that this world exists through a spontaneous "coming into being". This is probably the truth regarding the impious mysteries which the nefarious Ibn Qaddāḥ invented, and used to reveal only to those who could attain the top of the long ladder of the "degrees of initiation".

A reliable picture of the evolution of philosophic ideas in Ismailism, and their relation to those of non-Ismaili philosophers of Islam, especially such as al-Ghazālī and Ibn al-'Arabī, who differ from the Ismailis only in terminology, would be extremely instructive. Such a study may have many surprises in store: it seems that even the earliest known Ismaili philosophical

works, such as those of the very erudit Abū Ḥātim ar-Rāzī, show already a great advance as compared with the philosophy of the Encyclopaedia of *Ikhwānu'ṣ-ṣafā*, which is generally believed to be the production of the *end* of the fourth/tenth, or beginning of the fifth/eleventh c., while Abū Ḥātim flourished just at the *beginning* of the fourth/tenth c. Thus it is quite possible that the original version, or the nucleus of the Encyclopaedia (if it was re-edited and expanded later on, which is quite likely) [1] may really be one of the earliest versions of Ismaili philosophy, instead of the supposed colourful "revolutionary" productions of the "original Qarmatian phase", stuffed with mystic impieties and fantastic schemes.

It is quite possible that there were, within Ismailism and outside of it, in Shi'ite circles, some extremist mystic groups which were not satisfied with the "standard" moderate dogma, just as there were similar groups, left and right, in Sunni Islam. They may, very probably, from time to time, have produced abstruse gnostic and fantastic theories, or semi-poetical inspired books, which revealed surprising ideas about the creation of the world, or the times before its creation, just as the *Ummu'l-kitāb*. But it must be remembered that the latter undoubtedly is the product of the fourth/tenth c., or even later, and if it reflects to a certain extent some Qarmatian beliefs, we must clearly take into consideration the fact that in all such productions, as in every mystic work, usually the most rudimentary elements and superstitions are brought to the fore. Their authors never look *before* themselves, but invariably turn their backs on reality and on actual affairs [2].

[1] Cf. above, p. 35, note 2.

[2] Similar cases of small groups of devotees, carried away by their religious fancies, are common in every religion,— we have only to remember the mystics of the middle ages, both catholic and protestant, the Talmud literature, etc. The works of all these groups closely resemble books like the *Ummu'l-kitāb*, both in spirit, and even in the letter. There is no reason whatever to see in them signs of "antiquity", or even "Manichaean", or "Mazdakite", or other "influences": the mind of the mystic is usually poorly furnished, and all his dreams are made up out of a very

Such early Ismaili works as *Kitābu'l-'ālim wa'l-ghulām*, or *Kitābu'z-zīna* of Abū Ḥātim ar-Rāzī, are, by their extremely moderate views, which most probably were those of the rank and file of the Ismailis of that period, particularly disappointing to seekers after "impieties". It is certain that these missonaries who achieved such fabulous successes could not have won hundreds of thousands of illiterate and semi-savage followers by initiating them into abstruse philosophies, or have roused their immense *religious* enthusiasm by teaching to them *atheism* or the materialism of the "Dahrites". This equally applies to the higher circles of the already initiated. This may be seen from the considerable literature which arose in the priestly circles of early Ismailism concerning the controversy which "raged" some time before the rise of the Fatimids, or in the earliest days of their career, probably still before they were in a position to exercise much moderating influence on religious policy. This is reflected in the voluminous work, *Kitābu'l-iṣlāḥ*, by the learned Abū Ḥātim ar-Rāzī (cf. *Guide*, 20*a*). Later on the controversy was reviewed and summed up in Sayyid-nā Ḥamīdu'd-dīn al-Kirmānī's *Kitābu'r-riyāḍ* (cf. *Guide*, 137), in which differences between earlier authors are smoothed over: Abū Ya'qūb as-Sijzī, Abū Ḥātim ar-Rāzī, and an-Nasafī. It deals with minute shadings in the interpretation of certain verses of the Coran, terminology of philosophical speculations, and versions of *ta'wīl*, but no dispute over the important and really fundamental matters.

The accusation of the application of *ta'wīl*, or allegorical interpretation of things religious, is met with very often, but may be justified only to the extent that the practice was open to abuse. By itself the theory of *ta'wīl* is perfectly legitimate in Islam: the Coran itself, as is very often pointed out by the Ismailis, makes much use of it, as also do most of the orthodox commentators on the Coran, as already discussed above.

limited set of elementary ideas. No wonder that their combinations often repeat each other.

There are theories that the third Fatimid caliph, al-Manṣūr (334–341/946–953), reversed the earlier religious policy, taking strict measures against extremists. Ismaili literature apparently shows no trace of such reversion. In fact there is nothing strange or novel in a "purge" of the ranks of Ismaili theologians, if it was really carried out: from the earliest times responsible Shi'ite leaders were always compelled to take serious steps to combat undesirable and misleading mystic extremism. Any quantity of reports to this effect are preserved in the tradition regarding early Shi'ite Imams; Ja'far aṣ-Ṣādiq is, in this respect, so to speak, a "classical" example. Not only general history, but to some extent even Ismaili literature itself, preserves the memory of the early Fatimid caliphs almost entirely as quite secular figures, great politicians, or generals, who most probably were not much inclined towards mystic trickery, in the style of their descendant al-Ḥākim. But the reports concerning a "reform" in the reign of al-Manṣūr may perhaps have some concrete basis: it was probably during his reign that the great compendium of Ismaili *fiqh*, the *Da'ā'imu'l-Islām* by Qāḍī Nu'mān was completed. Its appearance would certainly not have passed unnoticed, and its tone and contents, being just the reverse of the various fantastic ideas held in regard to Ismaili doctrine, probably gave food for the talk of a "reform", or the 'reversal" of the policy of the supposed "impieties".[1]

It would be difficult to believe that such extremely capable and gifted rulers as the first Fatimids would be simple enough to kill the goose which was laying the golden eggs for them, or to demobilise a victorious army in a country still incompletely conquered, only to please those whom they desired to conquer.

[1] B. Lewis, "The Origins of Ismā'īlism", Cambridge, 1940, p. 87 (from 'Abdu'l-Jabbār): "after the defeat of Abū Yazīd, he, al-Manṣūr, pretended to return to Islam . . . He listened to jurists and traditionists and deceived the common people . . . He affected an interest in jurisprudence (*fiqh*)". The *Da'ā'imu'l-Islām* to this day remains probably the central book in Ismaili literature, and there is little doubt that it perfectly reflects the Ismailism which was the religion of the masses under the early Fatimids.

They could not throw away the ideas which had proved to possess so great an appeal for the masses, in order to appease such discontented Sunnis as remained in their kingdom. There are, moreover, many proofs that their successes and the establishment of their own state with its ample resources had given a new impetus to their widespread propaganda which was active in Central Asia, all over Persia, in Western India, and probably in many other places. The ubiquitous *da'wati Miṣriyān*, carried on apparently by the same old and well-tested methods, was achieving remarkable successes.

The myth of Ibn al-Qaddāḥ, and its evolution, is not only interesting from the point of view of Ismaili, and of general Islamic studies; it may also be useful to students of folklore: here we have not merely the fragmentary and conjectural testimony of slight allusions, but can trace almost every step with remarkable minuteness, through the help of Islamic historiography.

2. *The Myth of Ibn al-Qaddāḥ and the Ismailis.*

It is really remarkable that under what may be in a way called "the pressure of the public opinion", a myth, invented and directed against the most vital and important doctrine of the sect, was forced into their own system, and there accommodated after some slight modification and toning down. The process took a fairly long time, at least some centuries; and here again, as it seems, we have an interesting opportunity of following the evolution and the different stages of the process.

As already fully discussed in my previous paper, in the JBBRAS, 1940 (pp. 74–76), apparently the earliest so far known refutation of the myth (if it be genuine), belongs to al-Mu'izz (341–365/953–975). In his epistle to the chief *dā'ī* of Sindh he gives a reply to an inquiry, which, briefly stated, comes to this: in the conditions of secrecy and obscurity in which the "concealed" Imams had to live, there was much of vague and confusing talk, as it were "gossip", while few facts were known for

certain. The people knew that Muḥammad b. Ismā'il's successor was 'Abdu'l-lāh, who was his real son, and this 'Abdu'l-lāh has easily been turned into 'Abdu'l-lāh ibn Maymūn al-Qaddāḥ. The caliph further on develops this idea by suggesting that this perversion of the true facts was helped by the manner of referring to the concealed Imams under some appropriate surnames: al-Maymūn (the Divinely Blessed One), or al-Qaddāḥ (not the "oculist", but "mystical Flint, spreading sparks of Divine wisdom"), and so forth.

We cannot pronounce as to whether all this is true, or not. But it seems that the idea does not imply anything improbable.

As mentioned above [1], there was apparently some sort of religious prejudice against mentioning the "concealed" Imams by their names. This possibly was the reason why the Fatimids did not broadcast details, true or even fictitious, regarding their biographies. The institution of the periodical *satr*, occultation, was according to esoteric theories as much decreed by God as the periods of *ẓuhūr*, or secular authority of the Imams. This idea was explained and proved on very many occasions, supported by numerous parallels from the Biblical and Coranic legends concerning ancient prophets, and so forth. Thus, from the point of view of the religious consciousness of the community, there was nothing shocking, alarming, or suspicious in the fact that these three Imams not only formed a "blank" in the tradition, but even were not well known by their names. Apparently it was only later on, in the course of time, when the followers of the Fatimids had become accustomed to know their Imams by a long series of names, that the gap caused by the absence of these three mysterious names began to be felt, and references to these Imams began to appear more and more frequently. At any rate the early authors, like Qāḍī Nu'mān, do not mention them, and give no details whatever.

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[1] Cf. above, p. 27 sq.

The first positive reference to 'Abdu'l-lāh b. Maymūn as the alleged progenitor of the Fatimids which I have been able to trace in the Ismaili works which were accessible to me, belongs to the very end of the fourth/tenth c. It is found in a *risāla* by one of the most eminent Ismaili authors, the chief *dā'ī* of Mesopotamia and Persia, Ḥamīdu'd-dīn Kirmānī,— *al-Kāfiya fi'r-radd 'alā'l-Hārūnī al-Ḥasanī* (who was a Zaydite Imam, born in 333/944, d. 411/1020; his name was Abū'l-Ḥusayn al-Mu'ayyad bi'l-lāh Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn b. Hārūn al-Buṭḥānī, cf. *Guide*, No. 135). The treatise is a kind of epistle in reply to questions put to the author by his deputy, 'Abdu'l-Mālik b. Muḥammad al-Māzinī, the resident *dā'ī* of Kirmān (which at that time of difficult communications and political barriers was chiefly reached *via* the Yaman, with which it was in close touch by sea). It consists of a series of explanations of various points, and the author often refers to his earlier works in which he had already dealt with many of the matters touched on in the letter.

In his book (which, unfortunately, is not mentioned by its real title), the Zaydite author repeats the usual accusations against the Ismailis, which Sayyid-nā Ḥamīdu'd-dīn quotes in full from the original,— they present nothing new. It is interesting that the basis of these accusations is a book, called *al-Balāghu'l-akbar* (apparently the same as the epistle of al-Mahdī, addressed to Abū Ṭāhir, the famous Qarmatian leader, quoted in the *Farq bayna'l-firaq*, pp. 278, 280–282; see L. Massion's Bibliography, p. 332, no. 15). The work is obviously an impudent fabrication. The author of the *Kāfiya* mentions a number of reliable and well-known Ismaili books, and invites the accuser to refer to these works, and not to one which does not belong to their literature. His defence generally is an explanation of the fact that words of the sacred text of the Coran have not a mere literal meaning, and that Ismailism in no way contradicts the *sharī'at* of Islam, either in spirit or in letter.

Further on he quotes the words of his opponent: "Know that the notorious pretender in Egypt who calls himself al-Ḥākim *bi-amri'l-lāh* (i.e. "ruling by the command of God"), is in reality the one who rules by what God has not ordered. He has nothing to do with the conditions with which an Imam has to comply, and he has nothing to do with the descent which he claims for himself. The elders of the family of the Prophet are in agreement on this point. The truth is that he is a descendant of 'Abdu'l-lāh b. Maymūn al-Qaddāḥ, who was a heretic. Moreover, if he were really a descendant of the house of the Prophet (*'itrat*), would it be possible for him to manifest so much foolishness and depravity, and acts directed against the *sharī'at*? All this makes it impossible for him to deserve the name of an Imam. No educated or intelligent man can be deceived by him. Only the blind and ignorant are fooled, or those greedy ones amongst his associates who know well that all that we have said here is true, but (pretend to disregard it) for the consideration of material advantages".

Here the case is stated with all necessary outspokenness. The reference to the "agreement of the elders of the house of the Prophet" most probably has in view the solemn refutation of the genuineness of the Fatimid claims, and the proclamation of their impiety, staged in Baghdad with all pomp in 402/1011 [1]. Sayyid-nā Ḥamīdu'd-dīn proceeds to refute this passage word by word. To our great disappointment, his argument is based not on historical, but on religious considerations. He refers summarily to his previous works, *al-Maṣābīḥ fī ithbāti'l-Imāmat* (*Guide*, 116), and the *Tanbīhu'l-hādī wa'l-mustahdī* (*Guide*, 118). In the first the names of the "concealed" Imams are not mentioned, and in the second, in the 26th *bāb*, they are named in a complete genealogy of al-Ḥākim [2]. There is, however, no reference to Ibn al-Qaddāḥ in either these books. The most interesting point for us is the fact that he plainly rejects the

[1] Cf. de Goeje, "Mémoire", p. 6.
[2] Cf. above, p. 46.

descent from Ibn al-Qaddāḥ, and asserts al-Ḥākim's descent from 'Alī.

This is precisely a case of an *esoteric* work which explicitly states the view that the Fatimid descent was genuine. It is an excellent reply to that current of opinion amongst orientalists which is summed up by B. Lewis in his "Origins of Ismā'īlism" (p. 16): . . . "historical notes and references in dogmatic and theological works . . . where they occur, are probably more reliable than the directly historical writings, because whereas the historical works are considered to be *ẓāhir*, or exoteric, the secret books on *ḥaqā'iq* and '*aqā'id* are often esoteric, reserved for the chosen few, and thus may contain information withheld from the masses". The *Kāfiya* exactly comes under this head: it is a confidential reply to an obviously strictly confidential inquiry from a local bishop to the headquarters. It was, most probably, a kind of secret instruction as to the course of policy. Therefore the flat rejection of any connection with Ibn al-Qaddāḥ, and the absence of any reference to the fact that he was merely a *ḥujjat*, or *ḥijāb*, etc., is of considerable significance.

But it is possible to add something even more decisive, if we accept the argument of B. Lewis. In his work, *Kanzu'l-walad* (cf. *Guide*, No. 190), which is one of the few *most secret* and important esoteric works in Ismaili literature, Sayyid-nā Ibrāhīm b. al-Ḥusayn al-Ḥāmidī (d. 557/1162), the second Yamanite *dā'ī*, in the tenth chapter, plainly mentions 'Abdu'l-lāh b. Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl as the successor of his father. Further on, he plainly calls al-Qā'im the *son* of 'Abdu'l-lāh al-Mahdī, and a few lines later, referring to Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl, he adds:—"*wa huwa mansūb ilā 'Abd bin Maymūn fi't-tarbiyat*",— i.e. "and he is *said to be* brought up by 'Abd (*sic*) b. Maymūn". If really the *Ghāyatu'l-mawālīd* is the work of Sayyid-nā al-Khaṭṭāb, we must take it for certain that Ibrāhīm al-Ḥāmidī knew it. And if so, it is plain that he simply ignored it, only adding, with much doubt in his tone, a few words concerning the supposed connection of the Imam with Ibn al-Qaddāḥ.

It is disappointing to find that in defence of al-Ḥākim Sayyid-nā Ḥamīdu'd-dīn prefers to offer nothing but some compliments to his piety and strict adherence to the injunctions of the *sharī'at*, and a reminder, that he is recognised as an Imam by millions, who obey him, etc. But we must be grateful to him for his courage in raising the problem so plainly, without the usual evasive circumlocutions of the majority of Ismaili authors, His high position and established reputation probably permitted to him to be so outspoken, without any fear that his expressions might be wrongly interpreted by his rivals. His contemporary, the *dā'ī* of Syria at the time of al-Ḥākim, Abū'l-Fawāris Aḥmad b. Ya'qūb, was in a different position, and had to use more diplomatic language.

In his epistle to one of his subordinate *dā'īs* (cf. *Guide*, 148), preserved in the second volume of the *Majmū'u't-tarbiyat,* he also apparently refutes such allegations, but does this in a manner more usual among the Ismailis, by not referring to the substance of accusations explicitly. His interesting work is a useful summary of the doctrine of the Imamat, as it was at the end of the fourth/tenth c., concisely and clearly formulated. This is why it was selected by the compiler of the chrestomathy. It is divided into 16 *bābs*, dealing with the different points of the doctrine: the necessity for an Imam, the insufficiency of the Coran and the rules of external worship alone for guidance, on impossibility of an Imam being elected, the *naṣṣ* (*b.* IV), the refutation of the Zaydīs, the preferential right of 'Alī to the Imamat, the impossibility of having two or more Imams at one and the same time. The ninth *bāb* specially explains why the Imamat can never pass to any one who is not an Alid by birth. The XIth *bāb* explains the impossibility of the discontinuance of the line of the Imams. It quotes the genealogy of al-Ḥākim, not mentioning the names of the three concealed Imams [1], and also a

[1] He mentions after al-Qā'im as usual al-Mahdī bi'l-lāh b. *al-a'immati'th-thalathati'l-mastūrīn min a'dā'i'l-lāh* b. Ja'far aṣ-Ṣādiq, etc. Both Ismā'īl and Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl are overlooked, at least in my copy. That this is simply the scribe's error, is clear from the 13th *bāb*.

portion of the sermon, delivered by him (at that time an ele
years old boy) in 386/996, on his ascending the throne after t
death of his father, al-'Azīz. The XIIth *bāb* explains th
validity of the succession of a minor; the XIIIth *bāb* gives
reply to the question why the Imamat must remain in the lin
of Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl, although this would go contrary t
the rules laid down in *fiqh* about inheritance in general. Th
XIVth *bāb* explains the doctrine of *istitār*, or occultation; th
XVth *bāb* explains, why the genealogy of the Imam should b
publicly repeated in the mosques; and the XVIth *bāb* deal
with the question of the situation which arises when severa
sons of the Imam claim to be *manṣūṣ*, but the real heir apparen
is prevented from proving his rights.[1]

From the list of the contents it is obvious that the autho
has intentionally touched on all the questions which wer
disputed in his time; but he has done it in an abstract and genera
form. All the traditional proofs of the Imamat are mentione
here, the difference is explained between the *mustaqarr* Imam an
the *mustawda'*, etc. It is disappointing that in the case of th
latter only Biblical examples are cited, and not those from t
Islamic period.

Speaking of the Ismaili esoteric authors of the time of a
-Ḥākim *bi-amri'l-lāh*, it is impossible to pass in silence over th
question of the relevance to the matter of the genealogy
al-Mahdī, and of the testimony contained in the sacred literatu
of the Druzes. Through the chance that copies of these boo
came at an early date into European libraries, and were speciall
studied by the famous Arabist of the beginning of the XIXth c.,
Sylvestre de Sacy (1758–1838), in his monograph, "Exposé de
la Religion des Druzes" (in 2 vols., Paris, 1838), the Druze ideas
on the Imamat, etc., came into circulation long before those of
the Ismailis. This has led to many misunderstandings,— this
time not imposed by the bias or religious fanaticism of the inter-

[1] Though no names are mentioned, the matter obviously refers to the sons of Imam Ja'far.

diary orthodox historians, but born of insufficient familiarity th Shi'ite psychology and affairs on the part of the orientalists themselves. S. de Sacy has obviously misunderstood many of these matters, and his errors were aggravated by others. It is really high time that the whole Druze literature was re-examined in the light of the progress of Islamic studies during the last undred years, and especially of original Ismaili works.

The Druzes, as a Shi'ite sect, apparently have much in ommon in their origin with the Ali-ilahis of Persia and Turkey, he Nusayris or Alawites of Syria, and probably the real Qarma-ians of Baḥrayn, or the sect to which belonged the *Ummu'l-kitāb*, which by chance is still regarded as a sacred book by the smailis of Central Asia.

It is easy to see why these extremist groups acquired scendency at this time: the activities of al-Ḥākim were such as o appeal to these fanatical groups, and stimulate their tendency owards the "perfecting" of the moderate Ismaili doctrine. As s known, al-Ḥākim was born in 375/985, and ascended the throne a boy of ten or eleven after the death of his father, al-'Azīz, who died on 386/996. It is difficult to say whether he was really nsane, as the anti-Fatimid sources maintain, or whether he was imply a "spoilt child", accustomed since his early age to have l his caprices fulfilled, and gradually losing all sense of pro-ortion and reality in his actions. However strange it may be, ich freakish and insane-seeming behaviour on the part of religious persons has everywhere and always a great appeal for the masses: all kinds of faqirs, mendicant darwishes, etc., specially cultivate it,— it is indeed their stock in trade. It is therefore by no means impossible that these "insane" actions of al-Ḥākim, invariably coloured by a kind of out and out "democratism", contained a considerable element of the mere search for popularity, and of consciously "playing to the gallery". [1]

[1] Cf. also above, p. 123.

Comparing the Druze ideas with those of Ismailism, we find that in place of a highly systematised and elaborate scheme of Islamic theology, such as is the Fatimid doctrine, we have a chaotic bundle of superstitious mystic speculations in which commonsense is the least prominent element. The Druze ideas on the Imamat, succession, and genealogy of the Imams, etc., are quite different from those of the parent religion. The basis of their system is the doctrine of the incarnation of the Deity in human form, which is not found in the Fatimid system. The Imams, Prophets, etc., are of little importance, and historical facts are handled with the greatest lack of ceremony.

The Deity, Mawlā-nā, Our Lord, has incarnated Himself in human form ten times, as: 'Alī, al-Bār, 'Alyā, Mu'ill, al-Qā'im, al-Mu'izz, al-'Azīz, Abū Zakariyā, al-Manṣūr, and al-Ḥākim. The order of the incarnations varies in different works [1]. It is revealed that 'Alī appeared in India, in the town called Chīn-u-Māchīn (not in Mekka or Medina, as we are accustomed to think, cf. Sacy, I, 18). But no wonder,— this 'Alī was quite different from the 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib known to history. The latter, it is revealed, was in reality 'Alī ibn 'Abd Manāf (why, and how, I have failed to discover) [2]. He was nothing in himself, simply a slave and a servant of Our Lord. 'Abdu'l-lāh al-Mahdī was his *nihāyat*, i.e. in him the excellent qualities of 'Alī have found their perfect development, because al-Mahdī was superior to him. The reason is that 'Alī swore allegiance to Abū Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthmān, and with all the support he commanded, and the resources at his disposal, he was defeated by Mu'awiya, and his sons become the latter's subjects, while

[1] See de Sacy, "Exposé", vol. I, p. 18-19. Strangely enough, the number of incarnations,— ten,— reappears much later on in the Indian Ismaili communities, which to a great extent combined the doctrine of Ismailism with Hinduistic beliefs, such as the theory of Das Avatar. There can hardly be any possibility of direct borrowing, or of common origin, unless we postulate a Qarmatian source (remember the ten 'Iqdāniyya) in the case of both.

[2] Cf. *R. Badwu't-tawḥīd li-da'wati'l-ḥaqq* (No. 7 in de Sacy's list): ... *kullu-hum yushīrūn ilā 'Alī b. Abī-Ṭālib wa huwa 'Alī b. 'Abd Manāf* ...

al-Mahdī, without money and with a handful of men, achieved what 'Alī was never able to achieve [1].

The basic condition for the incarnation of Our Lord is to be "born in the purple", to be a sovereign king from the start. Therefore Our Lord, after these mysterious 'Alyās, al-Bārs, Mu'ills, was incarnated first in al-Qā'im alone. Nor does this mean that in this capacity of his, he (al-Ḥākim) was the son of al-'Azīz, and the father of so-and-so; no, Our Lord incarnates Himself wherever and whenever He desires, without any rules being laid down for Him [2].

'Alī, son of Abū Ṭālib (or, as we have seen, in reality of 'Abd Manāf), really was the *asās* (i.e. the founder of the line of the Imams) at the time of "Muḥammad b. 'Abdi'l-lāh" (as Muḥammad the Prophet is always called in the Druze books), who was the sixth Nāṭiq, or law-giver. The earlier Imams are hardly ever referred to, except for Ja'far aṣ-Ṣādiq, who is occasionally cited simply as a theologian, in connection with some familiar sayings.

Islam, the religion revealed to Muḥammad b. 'Abdi'l-lāh, was not final or perfect. The proof of this is that by now, i.e. four hundred years after him, the Christians still outnumber the Muslims in Egypt, Northern Africa, Syria, etc. The last and final, the Seventh Nāṭiq was Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl, who has revealed a new law, cancelling that of Muḥammad (although in fact, they often are referred to as "*sharī'atayn*", the "two religions", explained in marginal glosses as *tanzīl wa ta'wīl*). But it also transpires that the Last, Final, and Seventh Nāṭiq

[1] *Ibid.*, as the continuation of the above.

[2] Cf. *R. al-Balāgh wa'n-nihāyat fi't-tawḥīd* (No. 9 in the list). Perhaps it would not be too hazardous to conjecture that this belief may be to some extent an explanation of the strange act of al-Ḥākim in appointing as his heir apparent his remote relative, a direct descendant of al-Mahdī by a different line, Abū'l-Qāsim 'Abdu'r-Raḥmān (or 'Abdu'r-Raḥīm) b. al-Yās b. Abī 'Alī Aḥmad (d. 382/992) b. al-Mahdī, who was proclaimed as heir to the throne in 404/1013. After al-Ḥākim's death he proclaimed himself the independent ruler of Syria (where he was the governor). But his rule soon became unpopular, he was arrested, brought to Egypt, cast into prison, and died there about 415/1024, probably poisoned.

was al-Mahdī as well [1]. Further, in addition to these duplicated seventh Nāṭiqs, Our Lord al-Ḥākim has also revealed a new religion,— obviously the one compiled by Ḥamza, the founder of the Druze sect.

It is interesting to note that just as 'Alī was the *asās* of the time of Muḥammad the Prophet, so 'Abdu'l-lāh b. Maymūn al-Qaddāḥ was the *asās* of Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl. [2] But, to our surprise, the very same 'Abdu'l-lāh appears also to be the *asās* of al-Mahdī [3]; and just as between 'Alī and Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl there were six links, so there should have been six (or even seven) links between Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl, his *asās* 'Abdu'l-lāh, and al-Mahdī. Seven names are really quoted: Ismā'īl (II), Muḥammad, Aḥmad, 'Abdu'l-lāh, Muḥammad, Ḥusayn, and Aḥmad. It appears that al-Mahdī was either this latter Aḥmad, or the son of this Aḥmad [4]. On top of all it appears that 'Abdu'l-lāh, mentioned as the fourth name in this line, was 'Abdu'l-lāh b. Maymūn al-Qaddāḥ himself. The next name, that of Muḥammad, is accompanied with a note to the effect that he was "of the stock of al-Qaddāḥ and of *Ḥusayn*,"— which Ḥusayn, is not explained. And his successor, the sixth in the line, Ḥusayn, is noted as merely "of the stock of al-Qaddāḥ" [5].

Thus we have three 'Abdu'l-lāh b. Maymūn al-Qaddāḥs to deal with: the first was the *asās* of Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl, the second was the *asās* of al-Mahdī, and the third was an Imam,

[1] As is stated in *an-Naqḍu'l-khafī*, by Ḥamza (No. 6 in the list), cf. *Exposé*, I, 74 ad 79, al-Mahdī, or Sa'īd b. Aḥmad, was the seventh *Nāṭiq*. In *ar-Radd 'alā'n-Nuṣayrī* (No. 15 in the list), he is called the *ḥujjat* of al-Qā'im, apparently using the term in the higher sense which it has in later Persian Ismailism. But it is definitely stated that he was the father of al-Qā'im: *aẓhara'l-Mawlā nafsa-hu min-hu*, i.e. "manifested himself from him". He, al-Qā'im, was acting and speaking through al-Mahdī.

[2] Cf. *Exposé*, I, 84-85. Sometimes he is simply called "Qaddāḥ", and sometimes Maymūn al-Qaddāḥ, so that there is complete chaos.

[3] The same "Qaddāḥ" is called the *waṣī* (i.e. *asās*) of al-Mahdī in the same *an-Naqḍu'l-khafī* (No. 6 in the list).

[4] He is usually called in Druze texts Sa'īd b. Aḥmad, obviously for Muḥammad b. Aḥmad of the Ismaili texts, the uncle and guardian of al-Mahdī.

[5] Cf. *Exposé*, I, 85.

the descendant of Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl, midway between the latter and al-Mahdī.

At the same time one of the sacred works respectfully quotes the saying attributed to al-Mu'izz: "I am the seventh in the second heptade; after me there will be no more complete heptade" [1]. As is known, al-Mu'izz really was the fourteenth Imam, according to Ismaili ideas, and al-Ḥākim the sixteenth. Therefore, although the saying was invented (or amplified) in al-Ḥākim's time, it is obvious that the Ismaili genealogy was recognised as true. Moreover, speaking of the Imams after Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl, it is said that "they were three, and al-Mahdī was the fourth of them", and it is added that they had also three "*khalīfas*" [2]. What were these *khalīfas*: *mustawda*, Imams, or their *bābs*, or *ḥujjats*? [3]

All this may be an excellent specimen of highly mystic speculations, but from the point of view of history it is pure nonsense.

We have already discussed (cf. above, pp. 45-46) the theory of B. Lewis, "The Origins of Ismā'īlism", pp. 71–73, concerning the "hidden Imams", based partly on these speculations of the Druzes, and partly on a faulty copy of the *Ghāyatu'l-mawālīd*, in which the name of the Imam 'Abdu'l-lāh b. Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl is omitted from its proper place. The genealogy of the Fatimids, suggested by him, Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl — Aḥmad — Ḥusayn — 'Alī (from the *Ghāyatu'l-mawālīd*) — al-Qā'im, is impossible. Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl was most probably born

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[1] Cf. *an-Naqḍu'l-khafī* (No. 6).

[2] Cf. *as-Sīratu'l-mustaqīma* (No. 12). Also the same in *an-Naqḍu'l-khafī*, where it is said that al-Mahdī was the *fourth* of the *khulafā'*: *wa huwa rābi' u'l-khulafā' wa huwa Sa'īd b. Aḥmad.*

[3] According to the Fatimid terminology, the members of the first heptade of the Imams were called *atimmā'*, while those of the second — *khulafā'*. Thus this title was applied both to al-Mahdī and al-Qā'im. It is difficult to see what is meant by the Druzes; cf. *as-Sīratu'l-mustaqīma*: *wa kānū'th-thalathat alladhīn rābi'u-hum Sa'īd b. Aḥmad al-Mahdī fī dawr Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl wa thalāth khulafā' min qabli-him.* Thus it appears that in the *dawr* of Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl there were seven Imams, and the *khulafā'* were the first three,— al-Mahdī was not one of these, contrary to what is stated above.

about 120/738, and al-Qā'im died in 334/946. As already mentioned above, this gives five generations for 214 lunar years, or 43 years per generation. Even if we restore the omitted name of 'Abdu'l-lāh, it shall be 36 years per generation, while for the historical Fatimids it is only 23. Cf. above, p. 54.

Thus a reference to the original text completely changes the situation. This is particularly necessary with regard to the Druze texts: de Sacy's analysis or summary is quite obsolete now. His "orientation" is quite different from the modern because he, with all his great erudition, had no knowledge of many matters which have become known in the course of the century which has elapsed since his time.

We can now easily see that the talk of Ibn al-Qaddāḥ being the ancestor of al-Mahdī transformed every 'Abdu'l-lāh into 'Abdu'l-lāh b. Maymūn al-Qaddāḥ. This was in no way repugnant to the mystical mentality. These transformations prove only one thing definitely, i.e. that knowledge concerning the true bearer of the name was as vague in sectarian circles as it was in those of their opponents. For non-Ismailis he was a kind of Shaytan, who was always at hand to be blamed for everything. For the sectarians it was the name of a supposed saint, about whom their memory was blank. But, as many other genuine saints were just in the same position, they could give him the benefit of the doubt.

The perusal of the Druze literature which is chiefly based on these mystic, or merely superstitious beliefs, is very instructive, as it allows us an insight into the hidden causes of various prejudices in the handling of historical tradition: we can see that al-Mahdī, although he was supposed to be the (second) Seventh Nāṭiq, the revealer of the Final and the Most Perfect Religion, and although he was admittedly the father of the first and greatest incarnation of Our Lord, al-Qā'im, and was superior in rank to 'Alī and all his predecessors, he, al-Mahdī, was nevertheless regarded as the "slave and subordinate" of Our Lord, his son, al-Qā'im. Why is this so? We may with full right

suspect that it is not only because he was not "born in the purple", but also for a reason that may appear very trivial to us: his name was 'Abdu'l-lāh or, still worse, 'Ubaydu'l-lāh. A person with such a plebeian name cannot be the Lord. It is moreover quite possible that this is one of the reasons why all the numerous 'Abdu'l-lāhs were so easily associated with 'Abdu'l-lāh b. Maymūn: because *'abd*, slave, cannot be the name of the *Lord.*

We may suspect that the omission of al-Mahdī in the *Ghāyatu'l-mawālīd,* and his replacement by a spurious 'Alī, was not only due to the confusion of himself with Muḥammad b. Aḥmad, surnamed Sa'īd, his uncle, but was also influenced by the same prejudice.

Turning again to the *Ghāyatu'l-mawālīd,* we may see that, so far as the Qaddāḥ myth is concerned, this work apparently forms the first and as yet a very feeble attempt at compromise. Here "al-Qaddāḥ,"— it is not clear whether Maymūn or his son,— appears as one of those to whom certain Imams entrusted (*waṣṣā*) their heirs during their minority. Leaving aside the Biblical prototypes, it appears that the predecessor and successor of "al-Qaddāḥ" during the Islamic period were the following:— Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya as the *waṣī* in charge of Imam Ḥusayn (*sic,* an obvious error for 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn, surnamed Zaynu'l-'ābidīn,— an entirely spurious tradition, which rests apparently on some special, non-historical grounds. Ḥusayn, of course, was an *elder* brother of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya) and, later, al-Mahdī Sa'īdu'l-Khayr in charge of al-Qā'im.[1] There is, however, not a word to the effect that

[1] It is interesting that while accommodating 'Abdu'l-lāh b. Maymūn, Sayyid-nā Idrīs not only separated him from his father, but also took into consideration the usual story concerning his being succeeded by his son Aḥmad (in his part of the progenitor of the Fatimids). As may be seen from the translation of the *Zahru'l-ma'ānī,* further on, he mentions that 'Abdu'l-lāh b. Maymūn handed his high rank after himself to an Aḥmad. But this Aḥmad was *a descendant of 'Alī,* and *not* his son. It would be exceedingly interesting to find out whether there was anything like a historic foundation for this detail, and whether Sayyid-nā Idrīs does not here entirely depend on his own pious imagination.

this "al-Qaddāḥ" was a *mustawda'* Imām, like al-Mahdī. As we can see, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya, mentioned here, is also not always regarded as such. There is not the slightest ground for any belief that on certain occasions Ismailism recognised the temporary transfer of the Imamat to a non-Alid. Contrary to this, Ismaili dogmatic and esoteric works are not only unanimous, but also emphatic on the point that never, and under no circumstances, can the Imamat pass to any one who is not of the *'itrat*, or progeny of Fatima. As mentioned above, the term *mustawda'* by no means always implies a *mustawda' Imām*. It is an ordinary adjective, or participle, and may be applied to any one.[1]

Whatever may be the real relation between the *Ghāyatu'l-mawālīd* and the *Zahru'l-ma'ānī* of Sayyid-nā Idrīs, a work of the middle of the ninth/fifteenth c., it appears that in the latter

[1] In addition to what has been said concerning the term *mustawda'* on pp. 54 sq. above, it may be mentioned that Sayyid-nā Idrīs, speaking of Ibn al-Qaddāḥ (*Zahru'l-ma'ānī*, Text, p. 47), and Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl having been entrusted to his care, employs the phrase: *kafīlu-hu wa mustawda' amri-hi.* The meaning of the last words is not clear. Some help may be derived from another passage in the same work (Text, p. 79), the story of the death of al-Qā'im, and the declaration of his will: *wa'stawda'a-hu rutbata waladi-hi'l-Manṣūr, wa naṣṣa 'alay-hi wa 'āhada-hu la-hu. Fa-kāna Jawdhar mustawda'an li'l-Manṣūr bi'l-lāh.* Taken out of its context, this quotation would prove beyond doubt, on the lines of the usual interpretation of the implications of the term *mustawda'*, that Jawdhar was in fact a *mustawda' Imām* for al-Manṣūr. The context, however, obviously a paraphrase of an early document (beg. of the *Sīra* of Jawdhar), clearly shows that this was not the case. And really, there obviously was no need in such a dignitary while al-Qā'im was himself living. It seems clear that in reality Jawdhar was nothing more than a trusted witness, and the *physical* guardian of the important state document containing the will of the caliph. By his position he was nothing more than a trusted treasurer and the manager of the palace. In the account there are plainly mentioned the *shuyūkh* and the *ṣāḥibu'r-rutba*, probably the highest religious authority, and Jawdhar himself has to ask those present whether they realise his own position of trust with the Imam. It follows that there is no connection between his being the guardian of the document and his rank in the religious hierarchy. In the ambiguity of the Arabic relative pronouns it is not easy to be certain whether the words *wa naṣṣa 'alay-hi wa 'āhada-hu la-hu* refer to Jawdhar, or to al-Manṣūr. The latter is more probable. Thus the expression *mustawda' amri-hi* in all probability means "entrusted with the order, or will (of Ismā'īl) concerning him (i.e. Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl)", either the written or the oral declaration,—and nothing more.

the compromise is complete, and the Qaddāḥ myth has been finally accommodated in Ismaili literature.

Obviously under the influence of general historical literature, Sayyid-nā Idrīs admits "al-Qaddāḥ" as an Ismaili saint. He duly differentiates between the father, Maymūn, and the son, 'Abdu'l-lāh. Both are canonised in the rank of *ḥijābs*, i.e. trusted high priests, whose functions were to "screen" the real Imam from his enemies. The father is associated with Ismā'īl b. Ja'far, and 'Abdu'l-lāh with his son Muḥammad, to give the story a greater degree of verisimilitude. The story most probably has as much historical substratum as many other esoteric revelations of this kind. The institution of *ḥijābs*, most probably, belongs to a period at least a century later. There is not the slightest trace of it either in the Ithna-'ashari or in non-sectarian literature. Thus all this can be nothing more than a pious fiction.

To sum up, the question of 'Abdu'l-lāh b. Maymūn so far as concerns Ismaili literature, stands as follows. The earliest sources never mention him, and apparently preserve no memory of him. Later, apparently after the theory, possibly advanced by Ibn Razzām, began to spread, we find documents unequivocally refuting these theories: the epistle of al-Mu'izz, and *al-Kāfiya* by Ḥamīdu'd-dīn al-Kirmānī. Apparently these authors in fact knew nothing about him, and therefore were unable to pin down the falsificators by quoting any definite historical details.

Still later, however, the legend becomes too widely known in non-Ismaili circles, and, in the absence of detailed historical information concerning that early period, too difficult to refute convincingly. Therefore a certain "tactical" compromise was introduced in Ismaili literature, and 'Abdu'l-lāh b. Maymūn, together with his father, were posthumously canonised in the rank of *ḥijābs*, although this rank, most probably, had not come into existence until much later after his death. The process of the canonisation of these early worthies was completed not

earlier than the ninth/fifteenth c., i.e. *seven centuries* after the death of 'Abdu'l-lāh b. Maymūn.

It is therefore clear that there is very little probability that Ibn al-Qaddāḥ played any prominent part in the launching of the Ismaili doctrine, and there obviously is no foundation whatever to regard him as the progenitor of the Fatimids.

VI. TRANSLATIONS.

Note.—In the translations offered here figures in heavy type, within square parentheses, show the beginning of the corresponding pages in the original text of extracts in Arabic, edited further on. In the first two works, translated here, i.e. the *Istitāru'l-Imām* and the *Sīrat* of Ja'far al-Ḥājib, such figures refer to the text edited in the *Bulletin of the Faculty of Arts*, Egyptian University, Cairo, vol. IV, 1936 (published in 1939).

It must be carefully noted that references in the indexes, given further on, *if given in heavy type*, refer to the *original text*, and to the corresponding pages of the translations, as marked in the way mentioned above. As the text of the first two works is not published here, references to these, in heavy type, are enclosed in *parentheses* in the index.

1. *Istitāru'l-Imām.*

(For the work and the author see above, pp. 7–10.)

The Book on the Concealment of the Imam and the Departure of the *Dā'īs* to Different Provinces in Search of Him.

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate!

Praise be to God,— great praise,— which is appropriate to Him, and which truly belongs to Him! And blessings of God be upon Muḥammad, the head of God's Apostles, and upon the members of his family, the pure,— great blessings!

Know, reader (of this book),— may God make thee a knower of the truth!— that as soon as the *dā'īs* lost touch with the Imam, and remained in great confusion, the principal amongst them held a meeting in the town of 'Askar Mukram [1]. They were seven [2]: Abū Ghafīr, Abū Salama, Abū'l-Ḥasan b.

[1] Now non-existent, but in the IV/X-th c. a large and flourishing town on both banks of the Mashrūqān (Ābi Gargar) branch of the Qārūn river in Khūzistān, about 28 miles South of Shustar. Now ruins near Bandi Qīr.

[2] As can be seen, there are only six names mentioned; so it is in all copies that I have been able to examine.

at-Tirmidhī, Jiyād[1] b. al-Khash'amī, Aḥmad b. al-Mawṣilī, and Abū Muḥammad al-Kūfī, the latter being the father of Abū Mahzūl, the one who (later on) slaughtered (at Salamiyya) the dependents of our lords, the descendants of the Prophet,—blessings of God be upon them![2]

When the people, mentioned above, met, they said: "We have lost touch with our Imam. Without him our prayer, fast (etc.) is of no use. We do not know, to whom we should hand the religious tax (*zakāt*)." (Later on) they held a meeting also with their subordinates (*awliyā'*) and sympathisers. These collected donations, and said to the *dā'īs* mentioned in the beginning of this narrative: "Go, disperse in the provinces of Persia, 'Irāq, Ḥarrān[3], and the Yaman, and search for him". Accordingly, the *dā'īs* started on their journey, dispersing everywhere, each of them carrying with him a description of the appearance and characteristic features of the Imam. They travelled in the guise of wandering hawkers, carrying with them on their donkeys different wares, such as pepper, aromatic plants, spindles, mirrors, frankincense, and different kinds of millinery that find demand amongst women.

Amongst themselves they agreed to meet on a fixed date at a certain place, selected in every province, different districts of which were allotted to every one of them to be toured. So that, completing their tour in a certain province, they would meet at an agreed place, informing each other as to whether they had collected any news (about the Imam). And if they could not find him in one province, they would tour another, in which another meeting place would be fixed.

[1] His name appears both in the form of Jiyād and Jiyāda.

[2] This is quite impossible, and is probably due to the coincidence in names. Abū Muḥammad al-Kūfī, who is known to general history under the name of Zakrūya b. Mahdūya, the father of Abū Mahzūl, i.e. Ḥusayn surnamed Ṣāḥibu'sh-shāma, "the one possessing a (prophetic) mole" could not have been one of the senior *dā'īs* in the early years of the thi ninth c., because he had sons just over twenty years of age in 290/90-

[3] Ḥarrān, a town in Upper Mesopotamia, is here called *jazīra*, "island", or "section" obviously in the sense of "province", as the term is used in Ismaili texts. Cf. above, p. 20, note 1.

Whenever children and women came around them, they would ask these whether there was in their locality a person, answering such-and-such description. This was done everywhere. Thus they toured the provinces of Aleppo (Ḥalab), Upper Mesopotamia, [94] and other places, but found nothing. Later on they came to the district of Ḥimṣ, and happened to be near Ma'arratu'n-Nu'mān [1]. Their (next) meeting place they appointed the mosque of that town. So it happened that the Imam also was in the same district, namely in the hills of Sumāq (Jabalu's-Sumāq), in the monastery known as "the Monastery of sparrows" (*dayr 'asfūrīn*), near Kafrabhūm [2].

When Abū Ghafīr, with Jiyāda, were passing Ma'arratu'n--Nu'mān, situated in the Sumāq hills, they were (as usual) shouting (offering) their goods: spindles, frankincense, mirrors, etc. Some women and children came out to them, and they, as usual, asked these whether there was amongst them a man, having such-and-such appearance. To their surprise, a boy and a woman demanded from them as a present something from their goods, promising to show them where the person answering their description could be found. They offered to them mastic, frankincense, and other things, liked by women and children. The woman and the child told them [3] that when just a short while ago they were passing near the "Monastery of sparrows", (they saw) the person (standing) with his servant. Abū Ghafīr exclaimed: "Allah, Allah! Show me the way to the monastery!" He rode on his donkey to, and reached the monastery. He took

[1] Salamiyya lies E.N.E. from Ḥimṣ, and E.S.E. from Ḥamā, nearer to the latter, just over twenty miles. Ma'arratu'n-Nu'mān is now a small town further N.W. It is probably referred to here because at that early period it was more important than Ḥamā (ancient Epiphania). Ḥimṣ (ancient Emessa) is also pronounced Ḥomṣ.

[2] F. '*aṣūrīn*. This obviously refers to what is shown on the map as "Tell Afer", approximately half way between Ḥamā and Maṣyaf, regarded as belonging to the district of the village Kafrabhūm, about ten miles South of Ḥamā. The name of the hills, J. Sumāq, does not appear on the maps,—probably it is an earlier version of the present J. An-ṣariyya. For *k-f-r q-w-m* read Kafrabhūm. Sumāqa is now the name of a village East of Tartūs.

[3] For *la-hu* read (as in F.) *la-humā*.

out the paper with the description which he had with him (in order to refresh his memory), because he had never seen the Imam personally before that. But when he glanced at the Imam, he (at once) recognised him from the description. He rushed from his donkey and fell prostrated before God, thanking Him that he had found him, for whom he was in search. (Then) he bowed to the Imam, and the latter asked him: "Who art thou?" The *dā'ī* mentioned his name, and explained that seven of them, the *dā'īs*, since that day exactly a year before, were in search of him, after they had lost touch with him. He, just as the other *dā'īs*, had searched for him (all the time), so far being unsuccessful. The Imam replied that he came to the place to hide himself, and these people came to expose him. "But as thou hast come here,— added the Imam,— and as thou hast met me,— go back, and send a word to all thy colleagues to come here and see me, so that I may meet them, and give orders with which you may return, by the will of God".

With great relief and jubilation Abū Ghafīr went to his colleagues, who also were immensely gladdened. All came to the "Monastery of sparrows", to meet the Imam. He ordered them to return to their homes, and to inform the other *dā'īs* about his being found. So, the seven *dā'īs* returned, and informed all the *dā'īs* everywhere. Later on a number of them visited the Imam, greeting him, and praising God at being able again to be in touch with him. The Imam received them with great kindness, and said to them: "I lived here for some time, but it is impossible to find here either medicine when required, or a surgeon for bleeding when one is in need of him, nor is there any bath available". Therefore the *dā'īs* went (in search for a better place) to the towns Shabūn (?), Ḥamā, and Kafr Ṭāb (?) [1]. Incidentally they visited Salamiyya. This was a newly built

[1] Shabūn (or Shayūn), and Kafr Ṭāb most probably are the names of local villages, which no longer exist. They are not referred to by Tabari. Perhaps Kafr Ṭāb is the same as 'Ayntāb, the well known town North of Aleppo, now in Turkey.

town, founded by Muḥammad b. 'Abdi'l-lāh b. Ṣāliḥ, [95] whom the caliph sent away from Baghdād, ordering him to leave the city, and to find for himself a town in which he could build a house, and to live there [1]. There was near the site (of Salamiyya) a collection of twenty-four Christian monasteries. Muḥammad b. 'Abdi'l-lāh b. Ṣāliḥ built a wall around it (read *sūran*), and settled there with his slaves, expelling the original inhabitants. He sent a word to the caliph in Baghdād, who was his cousin, informing him that he had settled in a town, situated in a remote corner (of the kingdom); but he wished to make it prosperous, and for this reason he wished the caliph to send a proclamation to merchants in every town, inviting them to come and trade at its market, so that it might become wealthy. He built in three months' time a bazar, being never tired of supervising the workers. Merchants began to come and open their shops, and (Salamiyya) gradually became a prosperous town. The tradesmen who used to visit it did not like to leave it; so (some) asked permission of the owner to settle there. The owner used to permit this to them, and the merchants began to bring their wares; their slaves began to deliver these, also requiring place to stay in the town. So in Salamiyya there were formed special quarters for merchants. The owner invited them to settle in groups (according to their origin). Therefore natives of different places settled separately: those who came from Balkh, from Medina, from Ḥalab, Raqqa, etc.

The *dā'is* came to Muḥammad b. 'Abdi'l-lāh b. Ṣāliḥ, and said to him that there was a merchant from Baṣra who desired

[1] Salamiyya was not founded by Muḥammad b. 'Abdi'l-lāh, but certainly considerably expanded by the attraction of new settlers. The town is very old, and, apparently, there must have been many Byzantine churches,— carved stones are still numerous there. The relatives of the Abbasids settled there soon after the change of the dynasty, i.e. about the middle of the second/eighth c. Muḥammad b. 'Abdi'l-lāh b. Ṣāliḥ is not mentioned by Tabari. But his father already had a sumptuous house there, which the caliph al-Mahdī (158–169/775–785) visited; he was the governor of Iraq for a time, and it is quite possible that his son, Muḥammad, was really exiled to his father's estate.

to obtain the usual permission to settle in the town. (The owner) ordered them to select a suitable plot in which the applicant would feel comfortable; he earmarked a plot along the main street, near the bazar. The *dā'īs* bought for (their Imam) the house of a certain Abū Farḥa. The Imam settled in Salamiyya just in the same way as ordinary merchants. When he came to live there, he built high walls (around), pulled down old buildings, and erected new ones. He married; his followers and *dā'īs* began to come to him. Later on he built a new lofty building (*qaṣr*).

The name of the Imam was 'Abdu'l-lāh the elder (or the Great, *Akbar*) [1]. He used to send his *dā'īs* everywhere secretly, commissioning them, or dismissing from service (as required). In appearance he was an ordinary merchant. Two sons were born to him in Salamiyya, Aḥmad and Ibrāhīm. He died there, and his son Aḥmad, not Ibrāhīm, succeeded him as an Imam. Imam Aḥmad (b. 'Abdi'l-lāh) had a son, al-Ḥusayn, who (after his death) became the Imam; he was the father of al-Mahdī. Imam Aḥmad also had another son, Sa'īdu'l-Khayr. Imam al-Ḥusayn lived until al-Mahdī was born to him [2]. Before his death he put his son in charge of his own brother, Sa'īdu'l--khayr, because al-Mahdī was still a minor. But Sa'īd usurped the Imamat, and designated one of his own sons as his successor. This his son died (soon). Then he appointed another son, who also died. He had ten sons whom he appointed as his successors one after another, but all of them died. Thus he found that the Imamat can only belong to him who had the right to it. [96] Then he repented, and prayed God for forgiveness. Summoning all the *dā'īs*, he explained to them that he himself was only a guardian of (his nephew) al-Mahdī. Realising this, Sa'īd returned the Imamat to al-Mahdī (when the latter reached majority), giving an account of what he had done. In this way

[1] No other 'Abdu'l-lāh is mentioned further on. Most probably thi is merely an honorific epithet.

[2] Cf. above, p. 41 sq.

al-Mahdī became the Imam [1]. A poet commemorated this in the couplet as follows:

> God has given thee something, than which there is nothing higher;
> How many people there are who wish prevent it from reaching thee, keeping it for themselves
> Instead of thee! But God denied it to all, handing it over
> To thee,— and thus the precious necklace is put around thy own neck [2].

The first thing that al-Mahdī did [3] was to invite Abū'l-Ḥusayn b. al-Aswad to stay in the town of Ḥamā. He was a very clever man. Mahdī said to him: "I appoint thee to be the head of all *dā'īs*; whomsoever thou makest a headman, he shall be the headman, and whomsoever thou makest a subordinate, he shall be a subordinate. Thou shalt reside on the road to Egypt". After this the *dā'īs* began to report to Abū'l-Ḥusayn, submitting to him the taxes which they collected (*zakāt*), and presents, and he forwarded all this to al-Mahdī.

The first thing that Abū'l-Ḥusayn (appointed as the chief *dā'ī*) had done in the way of altering the arrangements (which existed before him) was this: when Abū Muḥammad, the *dā'ī* of Kūfa, died, he left three sons,— Abū'l-Qāsim, Abū Mahzūl, and Abū'l-'Abbās [4]. They had a brother-in-law, the husband of their own sister; they murdered him on the accusation of his being an enemy (of the religion), disobedient to the Imam. Their sister complained, but they insisted, saying that their brother-in-law was a traitor [5]. Abū'l-Ḥusayn dismissed Abū'l-Qāsim b. Abī Muḥammad from the post of the *dā'ī* of Kūfa; and the latter, together with his brothers, was furious. They wrote to al-Mahdī, complaining that Abū'l-Ḥusayn deprived them of the

[1] Cf. above, p. 42 sq. In F.— *a'lama-hum* instead *'allama-hum.*
[2] In F. the quatrain is omitted. The necklace is here a metaphor.
[3] In F.— *a'mala* instead of *'amala.*
[4] F. adds Muḥammad (as a real name of this Abū'l-'Abbās). Further on F. reads: *wa kāna ṣihrun la-hum wa zawj* . . .
[5] In F.— *nāfaqa.*

dā'ī-ship of Kūfa without any serious reason, or fault on their part. Al-Mahdī sent no reply to them.

The three brothers then conspired, making a sworn agreement between themselves, to make a sudden attack on Salamiyya, and to kill this Ibn al-Baṣrī who empowered Abū'l-Ḥusayn to commit such an offence on them. They promised never to leave him alone until even the mention of 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib disappears from the world. After this they wanted, if possible, to kill Abū'l-Ḥusayn; if impossible, they intended to report on them to the government of Syria.

News about this transpired to the *dā'īs* resident in Baghdād, i.e. Ḥāmid b. al-'Abbās, and Ibn 'Abd. Some Shī'ites [1] wrote to al-Mahdī, informing him that the sons of Abū Muḥammad conspired to murder him, with his family. "If thou art sitting,— as they wrote,— then get up. The brothers have already started, intending to murder thee. If they do not succeed in this, [97] they [2] will expose thee to Aḥmad b. Ṭūlūn [3]. They say that thou art the enemy of the religion, and they want to expose thy affairs. Do everything to save thyself, without wasting a moment".

As soon as this news reached him, al-Mahdī gave orders to prepare for a journey. He took with him only his son Abū'l--Qāsim, and also Ja'far the Chamberlain, Ibn Barka, and the tutor of Abū'l-Qāsim [4]. He abandoned his residence with all that it contained: carpets, clothing, property, servants, and also the family of his uncle and brother, male and female, and

[1] In F.— *wa kāna jamā'atun . . . katabū . . .* Strike out the comma after *ash-shī'ati*.

[2] After *sabīlan* F. adds *wa illā*.

[3] Aḥmad b. Ṭūlūn was the governor of Egypt in 254–270/868–884, and was dead long before the events. It is obvious that the author means *Ibn Ṭūlūn*, in the sense of a *descendant* of his, the Ṭūlūnid. In fact, the governor at that time was Aḥmad's grandson, Hārūn b. Khamrūya b. Aḥmad b. Ṭūlūn (283–292/896–904).

[4] The reference to the tutor obviously implies that al-Qā'im was a small boy at that time. Cf. *Sīrat Ja'far*, p. 110. Apparently this is the same person as Ṭayyib, often referred to in the *Sīra*: "his name was then Burkān; al-Mahdī bought him for the education of al-Qā'im".

the children of Ibrāhīm. He entrusted all his wealth, with his house, wares and granaries, to Ḥasan b. al-Mu'ādh. He left at the time of the evening prayer, unnoticed by any one, entrusting everything (to God).

When he came out from the limits of the town, he sat for a while, pondering over what was to be done, and praying God to give him the right decision. He then sent someone to Ghaylān ar-Rabāḥī [1], a well-known man, an Arab, residing in the village called Salhab [2], who was a dependent of the family of al-Mahdī's uncle. He came with thirty horsemen, and al-Mahdī travelled the whole of the night, arriving in the morning in Ḥimṣ [3], whence Ghaylān returned to his village. Al-Mahdī continued his journey, the same day reaching Tripoli in Syria [4], where he rested for a day. Then he went to Palestine, and stopped in Ramla [5]. Here he received the news that the sons of Abū Muḥammad had reached Salamiyya, and were searching for him, fruitlessly.

The brothers continued searching for al-Mahdī for a whole year. They came to his brother, Abū Muḥammad, claiming him as their religious leader. But the inhabitants of Salamiyya pointed out that he was not their leader, who had fled, and was hiding in Ramla. (Hearing this), they continued their questioning, and ultimately made themselves perfectly certain that al-Mahdī was hiding in Ramla.

By this time one of the brothers, Muḥammad, had returned to 'Irāq, but Abū'l-Qāsim and Abū Mahzūl remained in Salamiyya. They often visited Abū'l-Ḥusayn, secretly, in Ḥamā, trying to find out from him information about al-Mahdī, and

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[1] In F.— ar-Rayāḥī.

[2] Not found on the maps.

[3] The distance is about thirty miles by road.

[4] From Ḥimṣ there is a direct road to Tripoli (there is nowadays a railway), and it is quite possible that al-Mahdī took this direction. But the *Sīra* of Ja'far (111-112) mentions the route — Damascus, Tiberias, Ramla and Egypt. Thus it is obvious that both sources are independent of each other. It is difficult to decide which version is more reliable.

[5] Ramla is now a small village between Haifa and Jerusalem, near the railway junction called Lydda. In the Middle Ages it was an important place,— the first large town on the road from Egypt to Syria.

returning again to Ṣalamiyya. When they realised that it was hopeless to find out anything from Abū'l-Ḥusayn, and that they could not trace al-Mahdī, who was lost for them, Abū'l-Qāsim, a real cheat, left, carrying with him the books (*dafātir*) [1], while Abū Mahzūl continued to stay in Salamiyya. Abū'l-Qāsim went to the tribe of Qāṣiyyūn [2], giving them preference over other tribes. There were already some *dā'īs* preaching amongst them, some of the subordinates of Abū'l-Ḥusayn. They converted the leaders of these tribes, such as Sa'dūn b. Da'laj amongst the Banū Mālik, and also the headmen of Banū Mu'riḍ, Banū Hujayna, Banū'l-Balwā, Banū Fakhdāsh, Banū Hudhayl, and Banū Ziyād. These tribes swore allegiance to Abū'l-Qāsim, followed him, rose in a rebellion [98] led by him, and collected together to march against Ṭughj [3] and Damascus. This Ṭughj was ruling Damascus with great injustice and tyranny. God avenged this on him, and these tribes fought him near the village called Mazzatu'l-Abā'ī [4]. Ṭughj ignominiously fled.

The insurgents inflicted heavy losses on his force, and besieged Damascus. Then they attacked him again near the place called Mazza (?), near the Madīna gate [5], again defeating him, and driving him into the city, placing him in a dangerous situation. Then Ṭughj sent a message to Badru'l-Ḥamāmī, imploring him to send help, because his enemy was pressing him seriously.

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1 These *dafātir*, "note-books", re-appear again in the story of the siege of Damascus (99),— obviously some sort of sacred writings.

2 This is obviously Fāṭimiyyūn, as the early Ismailis called themselves. Cf. above, p. 80. Tabari, III, 2218, calls them the members of the Banū Kalb tribe, of the clan Banū'l-'Ulayṣ b. Ḍamḍam.

3 Probably Ṭughuch b. Juff, the founder of the dynasty of the Ikhshīdids; he was the governor of Syria in 283–293/896–906.

4 Apparently non-existent now.

5 The name in different MSS appears both as Mazza or Marra. When on a visit to Damascus in 1937, I specially consulted the best authority on Syrian history, Prof. M. Kurd 'Alī, who, however, told me that at present the only village of that name known near Damascus, lies in about three miles distance from it in a SW direction. This, however, seems hardly probable: the "Qarmatians" were moving from NE. Probably here one should read not the "Medina gate", but "*a* gate of the city". If so, perhaps this was the Bāb Ṭūmā: there is near it a ruin of a mosque called Masjidu'l-Mazāz, which may have some connection with an early village of that name somewhere further North near the city.

Badr came with a relief force from Egypt, and succeeded in entering Damascus without being observed by the "Qarmatians".

The cursed Abū Mahzūl, meanwhile, left Salamiyya, and betook himself to Ramla, while his brother Abū'l-Qāsim remained before Damascus, repelling the attacks every day. When Abū Mahzūl came to Ramla, he incidentally met Ja'far al-Ḥājib in the bazar, while he was purchasing provisions. A man who accompanied him, and who personally knew Ja'far, said to him: "This is a servant of thy Master, about whom thou askest". He followed Ja'far, and entered the house with him, and sat in the entrance porch, bidding Ja'far to convey his greetings to the Imam, and to tell him that he, Abū Mahzūl, son of Abū Muḥammad, *must* have an interview with him. If not, he would at once cry out and reveal the identity of the Imam (to the public). So Ja'far entered before al-Mahdī, and told him what had happened. To this al-Mahdī replied: "Now that he has seen thee, and discovered us, better bring him in, as otherwise he may expose us". [1]

In Ramla al-Mahdī occupied a large plot, hiding in different buildings (on it). (Into one of these) Abū Mahzūl was brought before al-Mahdī. When he entered, he bowed before the Imam, and the latter received him kindly and with respect. Then Abū Mahzūl said: "O my Lord, verily we, i.e. myself and my brothers, left our houses [2], searching after thee. Now praise be to God who helped us to find thee. My brother came with a force which besieges [3] Damascus; I left him when he was on the point of taking it. Come back, because thy position is so strong now. All purpose of our campaign was to satisfy thee, and to appease thy anger, which was provoked by the machina-

[1] It is interesting that this incident is not mentioned in the *Sīra* of Ja'far. It is quite possible, of course, that even if it is substantially true, the name of Ja'far appears here only because he was the best known of the private servants of al-Mahdī, and in reality it may have been some one else.

[2] Instead of *baladi-nā* better read *bilādi-nā*, as in F.

[3] Instead of *ḥaḍara* read *ḥaṣara*.

tions of Abū'l-Ḥusayn, who stirred up us against each other. And if thou dost not wish to come personally, write a letter to my brother, to appease him, as he is angry with me".

Then al-Mahdī wrote a letter to his brother, asking him to forgive Abū Mahzūl, and not to punish him in any way. He promised to come personally soon after the arrival of the letter. He also gave a letter to Abū Mahzūl, addressed to Abū'l-Ḥusayn, bidding him to pay the bearer 500 *dīnārs* from the Imam's funds, kept by the *dā'ī*.

Abū Mahzūl then left, and went to Abū'l-Ḥusayn, and presented to him the letter of the Imam for payment. The *dā'ī* asked him, where [99] he had seen the Imam; and he replied: "at Ramla". Abū'l-Ḥusayn refused to pay anything, and Abū Mahzūl returned to his brother, who was still before the walls of Damascus. He met him in a somewhat unfriendly manner: "Thou hast come back, cursed one! Verily I shall murder thee!" At this Abū Mahzūl produced his letter. When his brother saw it, he kissed it, and read it. Then he asked: "Where hast thou seen him?"—"At Ramla", replied Abū Mahzūl,—"I had an interview with him". His brother asked: "Didst thou really see him?" And he told him that the Imam gave him, in addition to this letter, also another, to Abū'l-Ḥusayn, bidding him to pay 500 *dīnārs*, but when the letter was presented to him, he refused to pay anything. So he came to his brother to inform him about this.

After this he, Abū'l-Qāsim, summoned the headmen of Qāṣiyyūn [1], from the tribe of Nuḍār, presenting to them his brother who had just arrived. He told them that next morning they would launch an attack at the Mazza gate. He ordered them to swear allegiance to his brother, for forty days, because the next morning he was going to heaven, and would return after forty days. The shaykhs accordingly swore allegiance for the period of forty days only. He ordered them to place

[1] This is to be read *Fāṭimiyyūn*. Cf. above, p. 166, note 2.

at the disposal of his brother five hundred cavalry, which should be hidden in a certain garden, and would be able to come out in the action at a proper moment.

This was done, and they spent the night. Next morning they started the combat early, and Abū Mahzūl went into ambush, in a garden. The forces of Ṭughj and Badru'l-Ḥamāmī emerged. Abū'l-Qāsim ordered his men not to move until they saw himself mounting his she-camel. He made his she-camel lie, in the centre, while his troops were arranged on the right and the left. He was gazing into his book (*daftar*).

Abū Muḥammad, a *dā'ī*, disagreeing with him, said: "The enemy saw us, and is approaching". Abū'l-Qāsim rebuked him: "Wait till I rise". When the *dā'ī* insisted on his uttering the (word of) command, and the enemy was quite close, he threw a handful of dust (towards the enemy), exclaiming: "O Lord, burn their eyes with fire!" Then his she-camel stood up with him, and he shouted: "O Aḥmad, O Muḥammad, O Naṣru'l-lāh (= help of God), descend!" The troops attacked each other, but very soon Abū'l-Qāsim was wounded by a man belonging to the force of Badru'l-Ḥamāmī, and fell off (the camel). Badru'l-Ḥamāmī shouted his men to dismount and to sever Abū'l-Qāsim's head. And while his head was being severed, an explosive missile of naphtha was thrown by some one, and it burnt all — the murderer, the murdered, and the she-camel. At this moment his brother rushed from his ambush, putting Ṭughj and Badru'l-Ḥamāmī to flight, and chasing them (to the city), after a sanguinary battle.

When they had fled, and when the troops had collected in their camp, they began to talk (saying) that their master had gone to heaven, and that they should disperse. But Abū Muḥammad, the *dā'ī*, and their leader, told them that they had sworn allegiance to the brother of the deceased for forty days, until he should return. And if he did not return, they would have the right to disperse. Thus he made them wait for forty days. (Soon after this) the inhabitants of Ḥimṣ sent a petition

to Abū Mahzūl to come to their town, abandoning Damascus, and promising obedience. So he did, raising the siege of Damascus, and departing for Ḥimṣ. [100]

During the time at which all these events happened, Mawlā-nā al-Mahdī resided in Ramla, receiving reports.

Abū Mahzūl then marched to Ḥimṣ, and its inhabitants offered submission and obedience to him. Abū'l-Ḥusayn, amongst different local headmen, came from Ḥamā to congratulate him. When Abū Mahzūl saw him, he glanced at him with such hatred that the *dā'ī* became frightened, and fled, hiding himself with some one of his associates. When next morning the headmen re-assembled to greet him, Abū Mahzūl inquired about Abū'l-Ḥusayn, whom he could not see amongst them. He was told that Abū'l-Ḥusayn had fled. So he ordered (them) to make a public announcement to the effect that any one found harbouring Abū'l-Ḥusayn would be executed, and his property confiscated. This proclamation [1] was made on seven days, and then the *dā'ī* was found, and brought before him. Abū Mahzūl told him that his evil actions could not be worse than these. To this Abū'l-Ḥusayn's reply was only that whatever God does, He does the best. Abū Mahzūl treated him severely, and ordered him to be paraded on a camel, tied together with his son. They were dishonoured publicly, and cursed. After this they were brought to the camp in chains. The shaykhs of the Qāṣiyyūn (Fāṭimiyyūn) intervened on his behalf, asking (him) not to molest him, as he was their headman, and spiritual leader.[2] To this Abū Mahzūl replied that he had no evil intentions against him, and that nothing bad would happen to him. After this he marched from Ḥimṣ to Salamiyya, carrying with him Abū'l-Ḥusayn and his son.

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[1] Correct *al-mundādī* into *al-munādī*.

[2] Here, and in several places further on, the shaykhs of the *Fāṭimiyyūn* are made to act differently from the other "Qarmatians". It is quite possible that the invading force really included non-Ismaili elements, who joined it merely for the sake of loot, perhaps even real Qarmatians. Thus it is quite possible that in the matters connected with religious motives conflicts could arise very often. Cf. also p. 175.

He camped near the village called Fīyāḥa [1], with his troops and the two prisoners, and ordered his servants to dig a pit in the middle of the camp in order to bury Abū'l-Ḥusayn alive.

This, however, was not done, and in the morning the troops continued their march to Salamiyya. They ultimately camped, and Abū'l-Ḥusayn was (still) amongst them,— nothing untoward so far had happened to him. The place at which the invader camped was near the gate of al-Ḥafnada [2]. He remained there for three days, before he executed Abū'l-Ḥusayn.

(On his arrival) the elders of the family of the Hashimites came out to greet him; these included Ḥasan b. Mu'ādh, (representatives of the) followers of al-Mahdī, and also his relatives and associates. Abū Muḥammad, the brother of al-Mahdī, was ill at that time, and expired on the day on which the cursed Abū Mahzūl arrived. The latter remained (near Salamiyya) for a fairly long time before he arrested all the elders of the family of the Hashimites, ordering them to be brought in chains to the camp. (This time) he left in peace the followers of al-Mahdī, causing them no harm. When the leaders of the Qāṣiyyūn (Fāṭimiyyūn) tribes saw what he had done with the Hashimites, they came to Abū Mahzūl in a body, imploring him to release these, as they were relatives of the caliph of Baghdad. Abū Mahzūl yielded to their demands. Next morning he rode to Ḥamā, coming straight to the house of Abū'l-Ḥusayn, and the quarters of Banū 'Uthmān b. Ḥijāz, looting all the property of al-Mahdī and the personal possessions of Abū'l-Ḥusayn. (As mentioned above) the house of the latter was the treasury of al-Mahdī. [101]

While still in Ḥamā, Abū Mahzūl received information that Abū'l-Agharr as-Salamī left Baghdad with a force to pursue the rebels. He re-arranged his troops, appointing 'Aṭr b. al-Qandasī al-Aḥmī as the commander of a special force, which he sent against the troops of Abū'l-Agharr. The two forces

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1 Apparently it does not exist now.

2 The reading is uncertain: al-Ḥafanda, al-Ḥaqīda, etc.

met on the banks of the Euphrates, and attacked each other; the troops of Abū'l-Agharr were defeated, and he himself fled. His whole luggage, everything, was captured, and his own son was killed [1]. In the loot was found the letter of the Hashimites of Salamiyya in which they implored al-Mu'taḍid [2] for help, and asked him "to extinguish the fire before it spreads".

When the troops returned to Abū Mahzūl, informing him of the flight of the enemy, the capture of the whole of his luggage, and their discovery in the loot,— the letters, he took the letters of the Hashimites, and, calling the shaykhs of the Qāṣiyyūn, made them acquainted with it they contained. He then said that these were the letters of those people whom the shaykhs defended: these people asked al-Mu'taḍid to send troops against them, and to kill him, Abū Mahzūl, and the shaykhs themselves, together with him.

About all these events al-Mahdī, who was staying in Ramla, was well informed. Ṭayyib, the tutor, was travelling between Salamiyya and Ramla, carrying the news. Also Umm 'Alī (the nurse), whom (the little) Abū'l-Qāsim (= al-Qā'im) was calling for, weeping very much, went to Ramla, safely reaching the place together with another woman. So al-Mahdī could see from Ramla what was going on with Abū Mahzūl, and what he did after his retreat from Damascus to Salamiyya. The news was also received of what he had done with Abū'l-Ḥusayn and his son, and of his looting and burning the house of the *dā'ī*.

When the petitions of the Hashimites of Salamiyya, addressed to al-Mu'taḍid, and found in the archives of the son of Abū'l-Agharr, were shown to the shaykhs of the Fāṭimiyyūn, all the *dā'īs* agreed that as these people had acted in this way, Abū Mahzūl might do to them what he found necessary. He (at once) sent his men after them, and they were arrested: Aḥmad b. Muḥammad, Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad, Ṣāliḥ b. Muḥammad,

[1] This happened on the 15th Ramaḍān 290/12 Aug. 903. Cf. p. 82.
[2] In reality the caliph was al-Muktafī (289–295/902–908), and not al-Mu'taḍid.

Faḍl b. 'Abdi'l-lāh, 'Abbās b. 'Abdi'l-lāh, Balhaja b. 'Abdi'l-lāh, and many other Hashimites,— there were altogether ninety five shaykhs. When they were brought before him, they asked, what for he sent for them. He showed them the correspondence, and asked them whether these were not their own letters, written in their own hand-writing, the petitions in which they implored the caliph al-Mu'taḍid for help, asking him to send troops against the invaders. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad, who was the speaker of the party, admitted this, and implored forgiveness. To this the accursed Abū Mahzūl replied that God would never forgive him, if [102] he forgave them.

He then ordered them to be dragged in chains to the Jewish gate, where all of them should be decapitated by a Jewish convert, a man originally from Palmyra (Tadmur)[1]. Next morning he sent his men to the Hashimite quarters to burn their women and children, male and female. The number of victims was 141,— all of them were killed. A public proclamation was made forbidding anyone to bury or hide their bodies, on penalty of death. The bodies remained in the open until they were ultimately devoured by dogs and birds.

The people of Salamiyya, going one to the other, began to talk, discussing what had been done to the Hashimites by the invader. They emphasised the fact that nothing had been done to the palace of al-Mahdī, or to his men[2]. This, in their opinion, was because the invader was siding with al-Mahdī. Therefore they brought much of their valuables and property to be hidden and preserved in his palace.

Before the execution of the Hashimites, the "Qarmatian" argued with them, saying that they were the cause of Ibn al-Baṣrī's having left the town. He accused them of causing his house to remain empty, and his and his brother's families to

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[1] Obviously the same person as Ibn Naddāf (or Ghudāf) at-Tadmurī, mentioned on p. 179 (p. 105 of the text) further on.

[2] By implication, this sentence obviously refers to the fact that al-Mahdī posed as a Hashimite (i.e. Abbasid), thus being one of the people who were so severely punished.

become helpless orphans [1]. On hearing all this the inhabitants of Salamiyya became perfectly certain that he would never cause any harm to the family of al-Mahdī, and that he wished them nothing but good. Therefore they brought into the palace their goods and property for safe custody.

At the same time Abū Mahzūl secretly sent a letter to al--Mahdī, informing him that he had killed all his enemies who were the cause of al-Mahdī's flight from Salamiyya, and also the cause of his cousin having been, with his son, earlier deported to 'Irāq [2]. He invited al-Mahdī to come, without further postponement.

All this was only a ruse on his part, in order to lull suspicions in al-Mahdī, and lure him to Salamiyya. When al-Mahdī read his letter, he wrote to Abū Mahzūl, approving of what he had done, adding that he, Abū Mahzūl, would not be worthy of being called a Shi'ite, and his follower, if he had acted differently. In conclusion, he promised to come soon after the letter was received,— if God so pleased.

On reading this letter, the miscreant showed much joy, believing in what it contained. But God did not permit that the intentions of the evil-doer should be attained, and that what belonged to al-Mahdī should miss him.

He read the letter of the Imam to all the *dā'īs*, informing them that their lord was coming soon to the town, to occupy his palace and to enjoy his wealth, of which he had been deprived by the (local) intriguers. The *dā'īs* were extremely happy.

Abū Mahzūl stayed there in expectation of the arrival of al-Mahdī for four months, till [3] the beginning of 291/(end 903).

[1] Unfortunately there is no key to the real implications of these recriminations, which if known would most probably throw much light on the development of the events.

[2] Cf. above, p. 44. This is also a very interesting, but at the same time entirely obscure allusion to certain facts.

[3] As we have seen above, the defeat of Abū'l-Agharr took place on the 15th of Ramaḍān 290/12-8-903, and the "Qarmatians" were defeated themselves on the 7th Muḥarram 291/30-11-903, by Muḥammad b. Sulaymān's forces, that is to say almost exactly four months later. There-

He was still waiting for the Imam when the news was received that a force had been sent against him [103] from Baghdad, under Muḥammad b. Sulaymān [1].

He at once despatched a force of eight thousand cavalry and sixteen thousand infantry, under the command of 'Aṭr b. al-Karsh, and Qarmīz(?) b. as-Sahm, of Banū'l-Aḥm tribe [2]. They engaged the troops of Muḥammad b. Sulaymān at the place called Qaryatu's-Sayl [3], while Abū Mahzūl himself remained in Salamiyya. The men who were sent on the expedition were devoted to al-Mahdī; they had been converted by Abū'l-Ḥusayn. The command to start on an expedition was an unpleasant surprise for his men, and a certain number of them remained in the camp (disobeying orders and) remaining at home.

(On one occasion) Abū Mahzūl said to the *dā'īs*, who remained with him, that he wanted to go to the bath house in Salamiyya. So far he had remained outside the town, since his arrival till that (memorable) day, never entering it. This was merely a ruse on the part of the accursed one, (postponing his entry until) the devotees of al-Mahdī had gone. He began to despair of the arrival of the Imam, fearing that his evil designs would fail. At the same time he was afraid of Muḥammad b.

fore *min* is here an obvious mistake, or some one's later "emendation" instead of *ilā*.

[1] Cf. above, p. 83 sq.

[2] In his report (Tabari, III, 2239), Muḥammad b. Sulaymān, who can be scarcely expected to minimize the strength of his enemy while writing to his government, mentions only 3,000 cavalry, and does not specify the strength of infantry. His figures, therefore, should be nearer the truth, though probably still too high. The names of the leaders, given further on, in his report, obviously on the basis of the information collected later on from the prisoners, differ from these. But it is quite possible that either the prisoners were giving false information, or one and the same person was known in Ismaili circles under a different, non-official name, as often happens. The difference in the tribal names may mean that clan name stands instead of tribe name.

[3] Tabari, III, 2239, from the report of M. b. Sulaymān, mentions al-'Ulyāna, as the place near which the battle took place. Qaryatu's-sayl simply means "a hamlet on a stream"; it is quite possible that both refer to one and the same locality. No such names are found on the modern maps.

Sulaymān, who would expel him from the town, but would retain the dependents of al-Mahdī who inhabited the palace.

He ordered the bath to be prepared for him, and entered the town through the Eastern Gate, riding a mule [1] at the head of a party of about a thousand horsemen. The road to the bath house passed by the door of al-Mahdī's palace. He entered the bath, and (later) came out, pretending that he was going to the camp. But when he passed by the door of the palace, he halted.

There was a slave woman belonging to al-Mahdī, with her son Muḥammad. Finding that the malefactor had entered the palace from the main gate, she fled by a back door, with her child and his nurse. The name of the woman was La'b. She had lived in the palace for a long time, because she originally belonged to shaykh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad, and after him came in possession of al-Mahdī [2]. When she fled, she was noticed by Muḥammad b. 'Azīza [3], who knew her personally. (On seeing her) he said to the men who accompanied him: "Here is a slave woman of the shaykh, fleeing in fear!" He followed her, taking with him five men. He asked her whither she was running, and she implored him to hide her, telling him that he himself and his ancestors were under the protection of the family of al-Mahdī, and now he was breaking into their house; now that this dreadful

[1] It is difficult to see what idea is conveyed by the descriptive epithet standing after the word,— *muzawwara*? Ordinarily this would mean "falsified". F. reads *dharzawiyya*, which obviously indicates the designation of the origin.

[2] Who was this Shaykh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad? It seems that the author implies the guardian of al-Mahdī, his uncle Muḥammad as-Sa'īd. It is quite possible that al-Mahdī had inherited her after his death, or received as a part of the dowry with his wife, the daughter of his uncle.

[3] This man re-appears in the *Sīra* of Ja'far (110, 112, 114). It is stated that he was (112) a servant of the Imams, the son of the maternal aunt of Ja'far. His appearance in the rôle of a Qarmatian officer, and his attitude towards al-Mahdī's concubine, as narrated here, are strange. But there is little room for doubt that his acting in accord with the invaders may be taken as a clear proof of their identifying their cause with that of al-Mahdī, as also appears from the mention of the correspondence between the latter and his followers.

man had for unknown reason entered the palace, she was afraid. Nobody except him, Muḥammad b. 'Azīza, knew her.

The man demanded from her all her ornaments, promising to let her go. She handed over to him all the ornaments that were with her, and went to the house of a merchant, Ibn Abī Muṣaḥḥif by name, asking him to conceal her. The merchant permitted her to come in, in case no one had seen her entering his house. She told him that the evil-doer had entered the palace.

But she was followed by one of the five men who were with Muḥammad b. 'Azīza; he returned to his people, and reported her hiding place.

The accursed one entered the palace, and, in his impertinence, ascended and sat in the Imam's place.[1] [104] (Seeing this) the *dā'īs* who were in the suite of Abū Mahzūl said to the *dā'ī* Abū Muḥammad: "Thou art on easy terms with this man, so find out what he intends to do with the palace. Tell him that its master is the person to whom we have sworn allegiance, and Abū'l-Ḥusayn converted us (to his religion)". Then Abū Muḥammad came to Abū Mahzūl, telling him that he came to speak on behalf of the faithful followers of al-Mahdī, who want him to realise that they were sworn adherents of their master, and demand that he should not do any harm to the palace, or molest its inhabitants. He promised this, and requested Abū Muḥammad to go to the camp, intending to come after him very soon.

When Abū Muḥammad left, the cursed one sent his attendants after La'b, because she was the chief amongst the servants in the palace, and knew better than anyone about the property and hidden treasures. The servants were seeking in vain for her, shouting loudly: "La'b, La'b!" Then Muḥammad b. 'Azīza mentioned that he knew her hiding place, and could bring her. He was therefore brought before the "Qarmatian", who ordered

[1] It is not clear whether this act of disrespect to the absent Imam had any serious significance, and was connected with the reports about the "Qarmatian" brothers posing as Imams, cf. above, pp. 47 and 92-93.

to him to go and to produce her immediately. The man went to the house of Ibn Abī Muṣaḥḥif, and began to knock at the door, shouting to La'b to come out, as otherwise she would be taken by force. The master of the house dragged her out, fearing for his own life, and Muḥammad b. 'Azīza took her, with her child and nurse, to the "Qarmatian".

He greeted her kindly and politely, and inquired about her master. He reproached her for fleeing from them while they needed her help. Then he asked what she had heard about her master, who had fled from them. She replied that the master was coming soon, if God willed,— he would not delay his return any longer. After this (preliminary) conversation he began to ask her, where was the property (cash) of Aḥmad, Muḥammad, Ḥusayn [1], and of her master who had fled from them. He tried to provoke her gradually, and she replied that she did not know anything, as she was a newcomer in the palace. Then (losing her temper), she said: "Why all this long talk and false accusations? Thou hast come to murder us, just like the Hashimites, and to murder children,— God will revenge thee for us! O enemy of God, O cursed one, thou hast forgotten the benefactions which my lord bestowed on thee, and thy father before thee! Thou hast sprung upon us, frightening our children, ungrateful for all that God has given thee, and deceiving his saints!"— And she made him hear things that were not to his liking, knowing well that he was in any event about to murder all of them,— the curse of God be upon him!

Then she added: "O enemy of God, and of His saints! If thou desirest to kill us,— may God kill thee! — and so it is going to be! — do not cast our bodies out in the open, as thou didst with the Hashimites. We are different from them, do not cast us out in the open, but bury us".

[1] It would be interesting to know whether the order of the names mentioned here is chronological. They obviously belong to the ancestors of al-Mahdī.

Abū Mahzūl asked her, where [105] she wished to be put in case he killed her? And she replied, pointing to a cellar near by, that she wished to be put there.

Then Abū Mahzūl sent his attendants to call Ibn an-Naddāf the Palmyrean executioner [1], who came, with his sword in his hand. Then the malefactor ordered him to strike off her head, and throw her body into the cellar. This was done, and also her son and all who were with her were slaughtered. The attendants of the heretic then dispersed in the palace, and brought all its inmates, and all were slaughtered, old and young, men and women; their bodies were thrown into the same cellar,—eighty-eight people altogether. When it was finished with them, his servants brought his mule, he mounted it, and rode away, leaving in the palace a guard to look after it, and keep what was there.

He went to the village of Akhbiyya [2], and remained there for seven days, when on the eighth came his troops, fleeing in disorder. They had been defeated and put to flight by the force of Muḥammad b. Sulaymān, who annihilated all his infantry, and the majority of the cavalry. They told him that all his troops had been slaughtered, and there was no possibility of further resistance. They invited him to flee with them (to the desert), as otherwise Muḥammad b. Sulaymān would seize him. He replied to them: "Sit down". But they argued: "Thou mayest abuse us, but we have warned thee. So, if thou wilt go with us, then go (at once); and if not,— then remain to sit alone". And when he saw their determination, he started with them. No one prevented them from making use of the Palmyra watering place. They rested there, and then departed from Palmyra (Tadmur) for al-Warq [3].

Six days after his flight Muḥammad b. Sulaymān with his force reached Salamiyya, inquiring about the "Qarmatian".

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[1] Cf. above, p. 173, note 1.

[2] Cf. above, p. 171, where it is said that his camp was pitched outside the town, near the Ḥafnada (?) gate.

[3] This probably is the name of a district, and has nothing to do with al-Warqā', the ancient Uruk, in Southern Mesopotamia.

On hearing that he had fled, he said that al-Muʿtaḍid[1] (the caliph) had ordered him, in case the "Qarmatian" had escaped, to lay his sword upon the settled and the nomad population of the place. The inhabitants of Salamiyya prayed for mercy, asking him to have fear of God: they had been slaughtered by the "Qarmatian", and now he also came to kill them. On his demand for proof of the truth of their complaints, they asked him to send a reliable man, to whom they might show the bodies of the slaughtered[2].

When Muḥammad b. Sulaymān heard this, he felt pity for them, and told them to go and to remain in their houses, shutting the gates to protect themselves, because his troops were approaching the town, and he was afraid that they might plunder the inhabitants. He promised to send a man who would see their dead, if their story was correct. Then he deputed to them Muḥammad b. ad-Dayrajī, an old and trusted man, to whom the

[1] In reality al-Muktafī. Cf. above, p. 172, n. 1. The same also further on.

[2] If this is true,— and it sounds reliably,— the story of the whole population of Salamiyya, and even animals, having been slaughtered by the "Qarmatians" (cf. p. 83), is an exaggeration. If such a thing had happened, the news would certainly spread everywhere, there would be no question of punishing the population, and no one to be punished. There is at present in Salamiyya an Ismaili shrine, consisting of a small compound, apparently of modern origin, surrounded by one-storeyed buildings; in one of these is found what the local people call "the grave of Imam Ismāʿīl", where they declare Ismāʿīl b. Jaʿfar lies. This tomb possesses one extraordinary feature: it is extremely long, something like 25–30 feet. Having seen thousands of tombs in the greater part of the Islamic world, between the Nile and the Brahmaputra, I do not remember a single one like this, and have only heard that something on these lines is shown in Jedda, as the tomb of Mother Eve. The local Ismailis say that Ismāʿīl did not die in Madīna, etc., as in the legends narrated further on in the extracts from the *Asrāru'n-nuṭaqā'* and the *Zahru'l-maʿānī*, but ultimately settled in Salamiyya, and died there. There is not the slightest doubt that if this tomb has any connection at all with Ismāʿīl, who certainly never visited this place, it should be in connection with one of his descendants, and the extraordinary shape of the tomb perhaps may suggest that not one, but several persons have been buried here, and that probably the name was originally something like *awlād Ismāʿīl*. Perhaps, by chance, it may really mark the spot where the bodies of the family of al-Mahdī, slaughtered by the "Qarmatians", were buried. It would be quite natural that the memory of such "martyrs" should be revered in the community. In such a case perhaps the spot may really indicate the position of the house of the Imams' families of a thousand years ago.

bodies were shown. He saw the slaughtered children and women, and invoked the curse of God upon the man who had committed such a crime.

Muḥammad b. Sulaymān made inquiries as to where the "Qarmatian" had gone, and received the reply that he had gone towards Palmyra. He then sent a thousand cavalry to pursue him. They received information that he had entered al--Khaḍrā' (the oasis), but his men had dispersed, after having looted all his possessions. The shaykhs of the Fāṭimiyyūn reproached him for being ill-starred. He had fled on his camel, carrying some money with him, and had entered the Sawād of 'Irāq, never remaining (long) in the places through which he was passing on his way. [**106**]

Muḥammad b. Sulaymān sent a report to the caliph al--Mu'taḍid regarding the defeat of the forces of the "Qarmatian", their grave losses, his own flight, and the dispersion of the men whom he was leading, which left him quite alone. He asked for further orders. The caliph ordered him to withdraw to Baghdad, and he returned. Four months later the accursed "Qarmatian" was seized on the banks of the Euphrates, at the town called Qarqīsiyā' [1], together with his two servants. All were despatched to al-Mu'taḍid in Baghdad.

News was brought to al-Mahdī about what he had done with the palace, slaughtering all whom he found in it, and later on that the "Qarmatian" was brought before the caliph. Then al--Mahdī left Ramla, and entered Egypt, remaining there for a while.

When the "Qarmatian" was brought back to Baghdad, he was paraded before the crowd, and cursed. A special committee was appointed by al-Mu'taḍid, and he was tortured before he was honoured with the sentence of death. While he was flogged, he was questioned as to who he was, from where, what he was after, and in whose favour he was carrying on his propaganda.

[1] Cf. above, p. 83, and note 1.

He denied both that he was concerned with political aims, and that he was a Qarmatian. He said that he had been ordered to stir up a rebellion by so-and-so, i.e. al-Mahdī, from the town of Salamiyya. He described to them his appearance, and his ways of dressing. All this was recorded in writing, according to his revelations. Then he died a terrible death,— the curse of God be upon him,— and his body was burnt.

The caliph sent messengers to all the provinces, ordering his governors to arrest the man answering this description: but he was not found, because he, al-Mahdī, had already left (Egypt) in the company of some Baghdadi merchants, and Abū'l-'Abbās (the brother of Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh), on his way to Tripoli in the Maghrib. He was attacked by robbers on the way near Ṭāḥūna, when Abū'l-'Abbās, the brother of Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh, was wounded with a sword in his face. They arrived in Tripoli just after the messenger carrying the orders about his arrest had reached there.

When the order regarding his arrest was received, the officials began to search for the man answering the description, calling on the merchants who arrived from Egypt. Incidentally they came to the house where al-Mahdī was staying. When they saw him, they recognised him from the description, and said that they had no doubts that it was he who was to be arrested. But they were prepared to let him go if only he left the town at once.

There was in the caravan with him a man, called Abū'l-Qāsim ibn Ḥassān (who intended to continue his journey) [1]. So al-Mahdī left in his company, passing Qasṭīliyya, and entering Sijilmāsa, where he remained for three months, until his family joined him there, being conducted by Yūsuf al-Qahramān and Ṭayyib the tutor. While there, he received letters from Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh who was in touch with him wherever he stopped. He urged al-Mahdī to come, because a strong force of his supporters

[1] Apparently the same person as "al-Muṭṭalibī" mentioned in the *Sīra* of Ja'far (119, 121, 122).

was now gathered. But he waited in Sijilmāsa until Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh arrived (with troops).

Then al-Mahdī came out [107] to him, with Abū'l-Qāsim Muḥammad, the Imam (al-Qā'im), with Ja'far the Chamberlain, and all other people belonging to his suite. And then happened what everybody all over the world knows.

Praise be to God, the Lord of the Worlds, and prayers be on our master Muḥammad, and his holy progeny!

2. *Sīrat Jaʻfar al-Ḥājib.*

(For the work and the author see above, pp. 10–11.)

Memoirs of Jaʻfar b. ʻAlī, the Chamberlain, concerning the departure of al-Mahdī (blessings of God be upon him, and upon his holy progeny!) from Salamiyya, his arrival in Sijilmāsa, and departure for Raqqāda. Collected by Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Yamānī,— mercy of God be upon him!

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate!

And there is no assistance for me except from God, upon Whom I rely! He is the Lord of the Great Celestial Throne. I pray for His help to please Him, and to please His Prince, our lord and our master, Imam al-ʻAzīz bi'l-lāh, the Commander of the Faithful,— blessings of God be upon him, upon his forefathers, the pure, the Imams and the *Waṣīs*, and upon his descendants, the righteous and the pure! And I also pray God that all nations of Islam, the community of his Forefather,— may God bless him and his progeny! — may be united into one, under his, the Imam's, sovereignty, and that the religion and the order of the world may become perfect under his continuous rule, remaining under it for ever [1]. And may dangers never threaten his followers, by His mercy and generosity! Verily, He is the helper of these, and good is to be prayed from Him,— as God wishes!

He, the Imam, desired (to know) about all that happened to his slave (i.e. Jaʻfar, the author of these memoirs), and about the events which took place in the days of his ancestors, the holy Imams,— may God sanctify their spirits, and bless them all! The author therefore prays the Imam to forgive his mistakes, and pardon his errors, with his usual generosity and benevolence!

[1] Cf. above, pp. 104 sqq., on the ideal of "one flock and one shepherd" under the Fatimids.

May he overlook these, in his glory and greatness, as he himself knows better all about the matters which he has ordered his humble servant and slave to write, preserving their memory more correctly and more completely.

Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Yamānī, the humblest slave of Our Lord, the Imam, says: I heard these stories from Ja'far b. 'Alī al-Ḥājib (the Chamberlain), the slave of Our Lords the Imams,— may God sanctify their spirits, and bless them all!— who told me:

I was only a few months younger than al-Mahdī bi'l-lāh, [108] and grew up in his palace. The Imam [1] marked me specially for his service. I was brought up with him, while serving him, and was educated in the best possible way. The Imam never spared anything necessary to make me strong and well trained, until he attained what he wished. It was not necessary for him to tell me what he wanted,— it was enough for him to look towards me, and I could at once understand what he required, and would bring it to him, serving him in the way he liked.

He always preserved the best relations with his neighbours in Salamiyya, the Hashimites, who were descendants of 'Abdu'l-lāh b. al-'Abbās b. 'Abdi'l-Muṭṭalib b. Hāshim [2]. He even pretended before them to be a Hashimite (i.e. Abbasid) himself.

Great quantities of goods and large sums of money were brought to him to Salamiyya from his *dā'īs* residing in different towns. For storing these he excavated a cellar under the ground outside the town, connected by an underground passage twelve miles long. The goods and other valuables were usually brought to him on camels. The entrance of the underground

[1] Most probably not al-Mahdī's father, but his guardian, who is usually referred to here as "*the* Imam".

[2] He was the cousin of the Prophet, the ancestor of the Abbasids. Died in Ṭā'if *ca.* 68/687-8. Here, as in the *Istitār*, the term "Hashimite" is used in the sense of the "Abbasid", contrary to the *Sharḥu'l-akhbār*, where it is used in the sense of the "Fatimid". In fact, both the Fatimids and the Abbasids were Hashimites, because both descended from the same Hāshim.

passage would be opened for them at night, and they could march, loaded, along this subway, to deliver everything right into his house. Then they would also leave by night, and the entrance to the passage would be covered with earth, so that no one could ever notice it. It was an extraordinary wealth, and it is said that al-Mahdī after his successes in the Maghrib could not collect even approximately as much as he left in Salamiyya.

Every governor appointed to Salamiyya (by the Abbasid government) was treated with great politeness by al-Mahdī, who used to present them with valuables, showing considerable generosity to them. For this reason all the governors supported his interests before their superiors, behaving as if they were his servants. The Imam used to offer public entertainments, to which Hashimites, and other (distinguished) people were invited. After the completion of the feast all that remained was given to Umm 'Alī al-Qahramāna, the wife of Abū Ya'qūb al-Qahramān, a Christian, the grandfather of Abū Ayyūb, the chief cook [1]. (Both were slaves of al-Mahdī; the wife died in Mahdiyya, after she had embraced Islam. But this was long after the time when she was serving al-Mahdī in Salamiyya). She used to collect all the bread that remained on the table (after the meal), and give it to the servants who looked after the cattle, which were being fattened to be consumed at feasts. Other foods and bread were distributed amongst the servants, and every one used to receive from her his proper share.

The Imam [2], as Ja'far recalls, married al-Mahdī, just before he died, to the cousin of the latter, who later on became the mother of al-Qā'im. Ja'far adds: I remember that al-Mahdī ordered to me not to leave the door of his bedroom on the night

[1] Obviously in charge of the palace kitchen under al-'Azīz. Thus it is an interesting link with al-Mahdī's biography before his emigration to the West. It is an interesting testimony to the somewhat patriarchal conditions in al-Mahdī's family, when the husband and the wife, both obviously slaves, both were serving. Note the surname al-Qahramāna, and not al-Qahramāniyya, as one would expect.

[2] Obviously the guardian, not the father.

of the wedding. I was sitting with some women, who sat unveiled, when al-Mahdī opened the door of his room, and threw a valuable garment[1] upon me. [109] I put it upon my head, and danced with the women, who were playing, and congratulating me. Many (similar) events (of intimate house life) which I remember, were also remembered by al-Mahdī, al--Qā'im, al-Manṣūr, and al-Mu'izz.

Everything was quiet; messengers from *dā'īs* in different places were continually coming from everywhere, bringing money, presents, taxes paid by the faithful, *khums* moneys, and correspondence. The Imam[2] appointed al-Mahdī as his successor, making the recognition of this obligatory, already before he married him to his cousin. He sent special intimation everywhere, and made the *dā'īs* everywhere swear allegiance to him. Shortly after this he died.

A certain Turkish slave[3] was appointed by the Baghdad government as the (new) governor of Salamiyya. (When he arrived) al-Mahdī, as he usually did with every governor, presented to him valuable gifts. Other presents followed later on, but the Turk conceived some suspicions as to whether there was an intrigue being carried on against him with his superiors (by al-Mahdī), whom he began to detest. Being a mean man, he began to make inquiries amongst the people of the town, trying to find the cause of the rather exuberant generosity on the part of al-Mahdī, who, however, did not demand or aim at any benefit for himself. Some people who envied al-Mahdī informed him that this was the latter's usual policy with all governors,— to present them with horses or slaves. This was because he aimed

[1] *Sabaniyya*,—"veil of black silk". Perhaps used for turbans?

[2] Apparently not the father, but the guardian. The passage is really noteworthy, and would be invaluable for the solution of the Fatimid problem, if only the name of *the Imām* had been given. It may also imply a certain forced decision: *wa qallada-hu'l- 'ahda*.

[3] Cf. above, p. 80. Apparently it was the same man as Subk ad--Daylamī (Tabari, III, 2221), who was the leader of an expeditionary force, and was defeated by the "Qarmatians" near Raqqa in Muḥarram 290/January 903.

high: it was said that he really owned the East and the West, and in every town his *dā'īs* were found; his wealth was greater than that of the caliph of Baghdad himself.

On learning this the governor was seized with greed, and started begging from al-Mahdī continuously, for what was possible and impossible, far beyond all limits of propriety. No sooner would one of his requests be granted than he would ask for something else; on a certain day he made no less than ten different requests, acting more and more as a brigand.

When al-Mahdī realised what the governor was aiming at, he wrote to his *dā'īs* in Baghdad, instructing them to bribe the authorities to secure the governor's transfer from Salamiyya. The *dā'īs* succeeded in this, and the cursed Turk was in fact transferred, and recalled to Baghdad. But he found the source from which such a change came to him, and presented to the Baghdad caliph of that time a report, in which he summed up all that he heard about al-Mahdī, asking permission to return to Salamiyya, and arrest him.

At this particular time, as Ja'far remembers, a rebellion was started by a man, a Kharijite [1], whom some people regarded as a Qarmatian. The caliph had no doubts about his preaching in favour of al-Mahdī, and acting under the latter's instructions, because his force marched in the direction of Salamiyya. For this reason the caliph warned the Turk [110] to forestall the "Qarmatian" in his movement towards that town, threatening to execute him in case he was too late. He had to make haste to reach Salamiyya before the rebels, and to seize al-Mahdī, sending him to Baghdad by river. Because if the rebels came first, and joined him, his power would increase very much, and it would be difficult to deal with him.

The *dā'īs* in Baghdad at once sent a message about this, by carrier-pigeon, and by messengers, urgently. Their message reached al-Mahdī before the arrival of the Turk. Ja'far asserts

[1] The term "Kharijite" is obviously used here simply as an abusive expression.

that there was no connection between al-Mahdī and between the "Qarmatian", who did not belong to the followers of the Imam, even was unknown to him, and himself did not know al-Mahdī [1]. Thus both the Turk and the "Qarmatian" were approaching Salamiyya.

Having received such news, al-Mahdī summoned Fīrūz, the chief *dā'ī*, the person who occupied the highest rank before the Imam, and was the highest officer of his, being like a "father" of all the *dā'īs*, who all were his subordinates; he was the *bābu'l-abwāb*, the chief assistant to the Imam. Another man who was summoned was Ṭayyib, who at that time was still called by his original name Burkān. He was purchased by al-Mahdī for the tutorship to al-Qā'im. Other people summoned were: Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Zakariyā (the brother of Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh ash-Shī'ī, the *dā'ī* in the Katāma territory), Abū Ya'qūb al-Qahramān, and Muḥammad b. 'Azīza [2]. The latter was a cousin (the son of a maternal aunt) of Ja'far the Chamberlain; he also was a servant of the Imams.

All of these were ordered to take provisions for a journey, and to start with him. He mentioned to them that he was going to the Yemen. All the ladies of the family of al-Mahdī were left by him with Abū Aḥmad Ṣu'lūk,— they were: the mother of al-Mahdī, both his daughters, two daughters of his brother, Umm Ḥabīb (the future?) wife of al-Qā'im, and Umm 'Alī al-Qahramāna, the wife of Abū Ya'qūb (al-Qahramān). This Abū Aḥmad Ṣu'lūk [3] was later on re-named by al-Mahdī as Ja'far; he also was a son of Ja'far the Chamberlain's aunt, but they used to call each other "brother". He occupied an important post of trust under al-Mahdī and al-Qā'im, and died

[1] This, of course, is incorrect, but may be not merely a *pia fraus*: as suggested on p. 41, it is quite possible that Ja far, although a devout slave, was not an Ismaili, and in any case was not in touch with the secret religious matters.

[2] Cf. about him above, in the *Istitār* (103, 104). Perhaps, however, a different person is here meant, a name-sake.

[3] *Ṣu'lūk* means: beggar, brigand, thief. This is the reason of his being re-named.

in the reign of al-Mahdī, who sent him on the expedition in the (former) Byzantine possessions in Africa, where he conquered a large town called Wārī, making great wealth for himself from it. (Mūsā, the physician to al-Manṣūr bi'l-lāh, al-Mu'izz bi'l-lāh, and al-'Azīz bi'l-lāh, was one of the notables of that town). This Abū Aḥmad Ṣu'lūk exhibited conspicuous courage while serving under al-Qā'im in the Eastern and Western parts of Northern Africa, and was an able and brave man. And Ja'far the Chamberlain remembered that this Abū Aḥmad, his "brother", formerly known by the surname of Ṣu'lūk, killed three people in three years, while still in Salamiyya, and al-Mahdī paid an indemnity of three thousand *dīnārs* for him (to their relatives).

Thus al-Mahdī put him and Abū Ja'far al-Jazarī in charge of his family. This al-Jazarī [**111**] also occupied a position of trust under al-Mahdī, because he was one of the *dā'īs* of the highest rank. He died in Raqqāda, formerly the capital of the Aghlabides, after its conquest by al-Mahdī.

We started with al-Mahdī,— continues Ja'far al-Ḥājib,— being sure that we are going to the Yemen. Abū Ja'far (i.e. Aḥmad) Ṣu'lūk and Abū Ja'far al-Jazarī also left Salamiyya before the arrival of the "Qarmatian", on the day which was fixed by al-Mahdī.

We left in great haste, and hurried to Damascus [1] where we arrived safely. The "Qarmatian" entered Salamiyya after our departure, coming ahead of the Turk, the governor. He looted the town, slaughtering the majority of its inhabitants, and plundering our quarters, putting to death everyone whom he saw of al-Mahdī's relatives and dependents. There was no atrocity which he did not commit on the inhabitants of the town. The master of Baghdad (i.e. the caliph) began to take notice of him,

[1] It is difficult to see whether, owing to the lapse of time, Ja'far mentions Damascus instead of Ḥimṣ. The version of the *Istitār* seems to be preferable, because it would be strange if al-Mahdī had gone to the capital of the province, where the authorities would be the first to be informed about him, and to receive orders to arrest him.

although at the same time he did not cease to search for our party [1].

We left Damascus, and I remember that on that day I accompanied al-Mahdī, who rode ahead, leaving behind Ṭayyib and Abū Ya'qūb al-Qahramān, who supervised the servants and the pack animals with the luggage. The little al-Qā'im, who at that time was a small child, was with them. He saw a man holding a small white Yamanite dog, and began to ask Ṭayyib to buy it for him. His tutor objected to this, fearing the displeasure of al-Mahdī. Qā'im swore that he was not going to move from the place unless he had the dog. Meanwhile al-Mahdī waited for quite a long time, and then sent me to see what delayed them. I returned, found al-Qā'im crying, and asked him what had happened? He explained that he had asked Ṭayyib to buy for him the dog, but he objected to this. Ṭayyib explained that he did this out of fear of al-Mahdī's displeasure, who forbade him to do anything without permission. Then I promised to buy the dog, asking al-Qā'im not to cry, because it was difficult for me to bear the sight of his tears. We then tried to make the owner part with it for a reasonable price. The owner, however, seeing how much the prince wanted to get the dog, did not agree to come down from the five *dīnārs* which he asked for it. We argued and argued, when al-Mahdī sent Fīrūz after us. We explained what had happened, he went to him and reported, and he told him to go, and give orders to pay the man what he asks, because that day a messenger in search of him was coming to Damascus. So we bought the dog, and went on, travelling the whole of that day, and of the next, and arriving in Tiberias on the third [2]. We found the local *dā'ī* waiting for us on the road. When he saw al-Mahdī, he approached and said that he had received by carrier-pigeon the news from

[1] This, of course, is a summary of events, which were spread over several months.

[2] The timing is fairly correct, for forced marches; the distance, by motor road at present, is about 80 miles.

the Damascus *dā'ī*, [112] informing him that a messenger came from Baghdad the same day on which we left, bringing to the governor of the city orders to arrest us. The *dā'ī* asked al-Mahdī not to enter the town in order not to be recognised. So we continued our journey without stopping in Tiberias, and arrived in Ramla, putting up with the governor (*'āmil*), who was a devout follower (*ma'khūdh 'alay-hi*) of al-Mahdī. He did not know, out of joy at seeing al-Mahdī, how to serve him. He prostrated himself before him, and kissed his hands and feet.

I remember,— narrates Ja'far,— that I was waiting on al-Mahdī, together with Ṭayyib and Abū Ya'qūb at the table, at which al-Mahdī, the governor, al-Qā'im, and Fīrūz were taking their food, when there entered a messenger, the same who had been sent to Damascus, carrying orders from Baghdad about our arrest, accompanied by the name and description of the appearance of al-Mahdī. The governor read the orders, and handed the paper to him. When the Imam read it also, the governor knelt before him, crying and kissing his feet, and al-Mahdī said to him: "Keep quiet, do not cry. He, in whose hands my life is, will never permit them to catch us. Verily we,— I and my son,— shall catch their heads by the hair, and my horses will trample on the stomachs of the sons of 'Abbās. Do not be afraid that anything that thou fearest will happen with me".

So the governor of Ramla wrote to the governor of Damascus in reply to his letter that no man answering the description had been seen, and it was not known whether he had already passed the town. In case he had not yet passed, watch would be kept for him on all roads.

Then al-Mahdī renewed the oath of allegiance of the governor, and spent in his house the remainder of that day, and the night. On that night there was a shower of shooting stars, so al-Mahdī, the governor, al-Qā'im, and many other people ascended the roof of the house to look at the phenomenon. The town was filled with the shouts of the people, and their invocations of God.

Ja'far adds according to my calculations, this happened in 289/902, apparently in the month of Rajab (= June July) And I saw that al-Mahdī pressed with his hand the hand of the governor And he said to him that this phenomenon was a testimony of his high mission, and one of the signs of his success [1]

Then al-Mahdī summoned Muhammad b 'Azīza, mentioned above, and said to him "We start to morrow, with the blessing and help of God And thou must go back to Salamiyya, collecting as large a crowd of low class people as possible, taking a spade in hand, and distributing to them as many spades and pickaxes as possible Then start abusing me in the vilest possible way, ascribing to me all sorts of disgusting acts Stir up the crowd to destroy my palace If thou succeedest in this, make them pull the building down upon the pond which is at its foot, so that no trace of it may remain, and it would completely disappear [113] And if this is successful, lead them to the date tree which grows at the gate of the town, and make them cut it down, saying that under it the oath of allegiance used to be taken (from followers) After having achieved all this, stay there until there comes my order to rejoin me at the time when thy arrival is needed [2]

Ja'far explains that the reason for this was that the Imam [3] had dug a tank, strongly built, which was filled with valuables, and then closed it in Over it was built another tank, of the same size, and filled with water, it was kept full the whole year The Imam himself mostly sat near it And with regard to the cutting of the date tree the reason was this goods were usually brought to the Imam at night in order to be delivered to him

[1] Apparently this phenomenon (probably the periodical re appearance of the Leonidas) firmly associated itself in the memory of the old slave with the events of the flight Therefore it would be extremely interesting if an astronomer could find leisure to calculate the dates in or about 902 on which shooting stars would have been visible in Palestine,— this would be of great help in our search for reliable dates

[2] This detail may indicate that al Mahdi really started for Egypt *after* the "Qarmatians had slaughtered his relatives in the beg of 291/903

[3] Again apparently the guardian of al Mahdi

(through the underground passage). But the men who accompanied (the caravan) once missed the entrance, and approached the gate of the town. As they were afraid that the dawn was near, they buried the goods under the date tree which was growing near the city gate, or near the city wall,— I (the compiler) cannot remember correctly.

We started from Ramla [1],— Ja'far continues his narrative, — for Egypt, where we were met by *dā'ī* Abū 'Alī, who was residing and preaching there, having increased the number of assistant *dā'īs* of the Imam under him. Fīrūz, who had converted him and trained him, married his daughter, Umm Abī'l-Ḥusayn, to his son. Before entering Miṣr, al-Mahdī ordered him not to accommodate him in his own house, or in the house of any one who was known as being connected with the organisation, but to arrange for him a place with a trusted (outsider). Accordingly, Abū 'Alī settled al-Mahdī with a certain Ibn 'Ayyāsh [2]. And we did not stay long before a messenger arrived with the orders about our arrest. The governor sent for Ibn 'Ayyāsh, informed him about the arrival of the messenger, and read to him the letter. Ibn 'Ayyāsh replied that the person who was staying with him, by God, was not suspicious in any way. He was a nobleman, a Hashimite, an important merchant, known by his learning, piety and wealth. And with regard to the man who was sought for, news had come that he had left for the Yemen long before the messenger arrived. The governor believed what Ibn 'Ayyāsh said about his guest, but said to him that it was absolutely necessary to arrest one of the servants of al-Mahdī, and subject him to tortures, out of fear of secret reporters (to the central government). But otherwise he and his guest were free to do what they liked. Ja'far adds that he was the servant

[1] According to the *Istitār*, 106 (cf. above, p. 87), al-Mahdī stayed at Ramla for nearly two years. It is quite possible that some sort of confusion over the names of the towns is responsible for this discrepancy of information.

[2] In F. uniformly: Ibn 'Ayyās.

of al-Mahdī who was arrested, tortured, suspended, and lightly flogged, by light strokes, which caused him no harm. [114]

Before my arrest al-Mahdī summoned me, and said that I should not feel offended at being selected to be handed to the authorities for tortures. His intentions were to send me back to Salamiyya to unearth two "water-pots" (with treasure), which I had buried by his order, and about the location of which the other servants did not know. And al-Mahdī instructed me that when interrogated, I should say that I was a free man, employed by his master for a certain salary, and that there was no cause for interrogation, and that I had served him for a short time only, and now wanted to abandon to him the balance of my pay, and to return to my own place.

All was done according to his instructions, and when the governor released me, I visited al-Mahdī at night, and he ordered me to start next morning, not to deviate from the road until I arrive in Salamiyya, and to dig up the treasure. Then I was to buy some loads of cotton, hide the treasure in them, and hurry back. He told me to be careful not to show myself to any one in Salamiyya, except Muḥammad b. 'Azīza, his son, known as Abū'l-Layth, and Ḥasan, son of my sister. He promised to await me in Tripoli in the Maghrib, from where he would not move until he saw me.

So far we had no doubt that we were going to the Yemen; al-Mahdī never revealed his real intention of going to the Maghrib until that night. This appeared utterly disappointing to all who accompanied him, and every one hated even the mention of the Maghrib. But of all of us Fīrūz felt the disappointment the most. In the morning,—continues Ja'far,—I left, as ordered, for Salamiyya. The trial I had in Egypt was the first painful experience of its kind for me; but for it I would not have passed through the other one, in Sijilmāsa, safely.

When Fīrūz became quite certain that al-Mahdī really intended to go to the Maghrib, his devotion disappeared, and he decided to deceive the Imam. As mentioned above, he had

married his daughter to Abū 'Alī, the *dā'ī* of Egypt [1]. The latter had a son, Muḥammad Abū'l-Ḥusayn b. Abī 'Alī, who, serving under al-Mahdī, al-Qā'im, al-Manṣūr and al-Mu'izz, attained a high rank, and (ultimately) became the chief *dā'ī*. This Abū 'Alī, the *dā'ī*, insistently prayed al-Mahdī to take him with himself to the Maghrib, so that he should not part from the Imam; but al-Mahdī would not consent to this, and ordered him to remain in Egypt, until the time came when he would be able to come to him,— to his great sorrow and disappointment.

When al-Mahdī left Egypt, Fīrūz deserted him on the eve of his departure, fleeing to the Yemen. (Later on) al-Mahdī used to say that he had seen [115] two extraordinary devotees: one of them was very much aggrieved by separation from him, and the other by remaining in his presence.[2]

Fīrūz reached the Yemen, arriving in the place of the local *dā'ī*, a man from Kūfa, called Abū'l-Qāsim b. Faraḥ, surnamed Manṣūru'l-Yaman, of a noble Shi'ite family (*bayt tashayyu'*). He had come in touch with the Imam [3] through Fīrūz. So, when the latter reached him, he met him with the great honour and veneration to which he was entitled on account of his position with the Imam [4]. He went out of the door of his house to meet him, caused him to be seated there, and waited on him until Fīrūz had given him the permission to sit (in his presence). Fīrūz told him that the Imam had sent him as a messenger to inform him that he, al-Mahdī, was going to invade Egypt with the troops of the Maghrib, and was going to write to the Yamanite *dā'ī* to join him there with the troops of al-Yaman. The *dā'ī* Abū'l-Qāsim, certainly, took all this for truth.

Fīrūz no doubt understood what he was doing, and that the Imam would certainly write to the *dā'ī* about his treason, and

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[1] It is stated on the preceding page that he married his daughter to the *son* of Abū 'Alī.

[2] Cf. above, p. 52.

[3] A puzzling statement: was he converted by Fīrūz? Or did he enter the religious service through him? Or was he promoted? Most probably even here "the Imām" referred to is the guardian of al-Mahdī.

[4] Here "the Imām" obviously refers to al-Mahdī.

give him orders to take the necessary steps. He bribed a young servant of Abū'l-Qāsim, by offering him much more than he received from his master, so that the servant became his spy in the house of the *dā'ī*. He was instructed to report about everything that was going on there, sending him word at any time of the day or night. And the spy used to report everything. Then came the letter of al-Mahdī, together with another from Abū 'Alī, the son-in-law of Fīrūz, informing him of the exploits of the latter, with al-Mahdī's orders for his execution When the letter came, the spy immediately informed Fīrūz, and he fled at once. When the *dā'ī* sent for him, nobody knew where he had gone. The *dā'ī* searched for him everywhere until he found that Fīrūz had joined 'Alī b. al-Faḍl al-Jayshānī [1], stirring him up to rebellion and treason. The *dā'ī* Abū'l-Qāsim, learning of all this, and of the efforts of Fīrūz to proclaim himself an Imam, helped by the shaykh and the people of that place, attacked them with a force, and, after a long struggle, ultimately suppressed them, and executed both of them.

(Returning to the story of al-Mahdī) Ja'far narrates that while he was travelling with a caravan between Egypt and Ṭāḥūna, the party was attacked by the Berbers, who looted the caravan, taking away some portion of the baggage of the Imam, who lost his books which contained "numerous revelations". This last circumstance grieved him much more than the loss of all other things. But God returned these books to him, and they were recovered during the first campaign of al-Qā'im against Egypt.[2] [116]

When al-Mahdī reached Tripoli, all the people who travelled by the caravan dispersed, except for Ṭayyib and al-Qahramān. He sent Muḥammad b. Aḥmad, the brother of Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh

[1] Cf. p. 225, and Texts, p. 40, the events as narrated in the *Iftitāḥu'd-da'wa*.

[2] This may imply certain sacred books They are also mentioned in the *Iftitāḥu'd-da'wa* (Texts, p. 41), from where apparently this information is taken (cf. also *Istitār*. 106). Cf. p. 226 sq

(the *dā'ī* in the Katāma territory), to Qayrawān, together with the Katāma tribesmen who were sent to the Imam to Salamiyya [1]. His mission was to get through with these men to his brother, and inform him of the arrival of al-Mahdī. Abū'l-'Abbās Muḥammad b. Aḥmad safely reached Qayrawān. It was the intention of al-Mahdī to go to the Katāma territory to join Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh. But when Abū'l-'Abbās reached Qayrawān, he found that Ziyādatu'l-lāh, the ruler of the Maghrib [2], had already received orders to arrest al-Mahdī, accompanied by a description of his appearance, and the information that they had missed him in Egypt. He was instructed to make a search for him. Some people, who travelled by the same caravan, informed the authorities that the man who was searched for had remained in Tripoli, but Abū'l-'Abbās Muḥammad b. Aḥmad was one of his associates. The latter tried to take shelter somewhere, but did not succeed in this, finding no one whom he knew, and in whom he could trust and confide. So he was ultimately arrested, and tried. He denied all connection with al-Mahdī, insisting that he was an ordinary merchant. He was, nevertheless, imprisoned, and the news about this reached al-Mahdī.

I met al-Mahdī,— Ja'far continues his narrative,— after my return with the treasure for which he had sent me, and soon after this a caravan was formed, with the intention of travelling to Sijilmāsa *via* Qasṭīliyya. He thanked God for my safe return, and for being able to regain his treasure. Thus, al-Mahdī started with this caravan, taking us with him as servants, to Samāṭa (?) [3] in the Qasṭīliyya province. We stopped in the town of Tūzar, remaining in it for a few days in order to celebrate the holiday, and on the *'īd* day we started for Sijilmāsa.

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[1] This is an extremely interesting reference. Unfortunately for us, no further information is given about them. It seems that they played no part in al-Mahdī's experiences in Sijilmāsa, and his release from captivity. Cf. p. 226, obviously the source of this information.

[2] The last ruler of the Aghlabid dynasty (184–296/800–909), whose full name was Ziyādatu'l-lāh III b. 'Abdi'l-lāh b. Ibrāhīm b. Aḥmad (290–296/903–909).

[3] In F.— Ismāṭa.

I remember,— narrates Ja'far,— that while we were resting there, al-Mahdī told me once to go and find for him a small fat lamb, and, if found, to buy it, roast it, and serve it to him. I went to look for it, and a local inhabitant offered me one, inviting me to come to his house. I went with him, and he took me into his house where I found a hairy dog on a strong chain, with reddened eyes (ready to attack). The owner said to me that it was then two months that he had been feeding it with dates. He kept it chained so that it could not move — its skin had become tight on it because of the great amount of fat. It appears that the local people eat dogs, applying to them the name of lambs. So the dog jumped upon me on its chain,— a dog fearsome as a lion when it attacks. I was sure that it would break the chain, tearing my stomach. So I fled for all that I was worth, out of the house, despairing of my life, while the owner was shouting (to return) but I did not dare to do this. I felt terror stricken [117] until I entered the house of al-Mahdī half mad, with hands on my heart. When he saw me much frightened, with pale face, he asked me, who was chasing me. I replied: "My lord, curse be upon the people of this town!" And I told him how I had gone in search of what he ordered me to get, and what happened as a result of this — the whole story. And while I was telling my story, he, and my lord al-Qā'im never ceased laughing, and consoling me until I became quiet.

A day or two later al-Mahdī ordered me to bring him a barber, instructing me to get one who was a stranger in the town. So, I went and by chance met a barber, in whose appearance there were traces of a journey. I asked him whether he was a stranger, and he said yes. I asked him when he entered the town, and he said that he had arrived two days ago. I took him with me, brought him to the house, and told al-Mahdī that he was a stranger. When the Imam saw him, he asked his name, his place of origin, and whether he was a freeman, or a slave. It was his habit that when seeing a man for the first time he would first ask the name and the birthplace of the man before

starting a conversation and acquaintance with him. So, when he asked the barber his usual questions, he said that he was a native of Ifrīqiyya, from Qayrawān, that he had left his native place a long time ago, spending his time in the Katāma territory, from whence he had arrived in this town. The Imam asked him, how he could enter the Katāma districts, and stay there, while, as people said, there was so much excitement, and the country was ruled by the heretics. To this the barber replied that, by God, there was no more righteous administration than in the Katāma territory. Al-Mahdī remarked that this was contrary to what was everywhere narrated about the rule of a stranger [1] who had installed himself there. The people said that he had seduced them into heresy, making lawful to them their daughters and sisters, or permitting them not to fast or offer prayers. To this the barber replied: "By God, beside of whom there is no other deity,— there is nothing like this in reality, and there is no other true religion in the world except that which is preached by that man in the Katāma country". The Imam asked, what made him so pleased with the rule of the man, whom he praised so much while nobody would endorse this view. The barber narrated that he had a partner, whom he persuaded to come with him to the town of Saṭīq, and work there for a month. "We shared our earnings which God gave us. We went to Saṭīq, and when we wanted to enter it, through the gate, we were stopped and told that carrying arms was prohibited in the town. We pleaded the impossibility of leaving our arms outside as we did not know any one who would keep these. But the guards told us simply to leave our arms near the city walls. We asked as to how we should simply throw these away, and were assured that we need not be afraid about their safety. So we left them, and entered the town, and stayed long there, [118] because it was difficult for us to leave it after we had settled there. And we remained there a month. But when

[1] May also mean: a Kharijite.

we left, we found our arms quite safe, nothing missing in them This is, O my lord, the way of life, established by that person whom rumours accuse of heresy and atheism ' Ja‘far adds "And I saw that the face of al-Mahdī was shining (with delight) When the barber finished his work al-Mahdī ordered him to be paid handsomely, and dismissed him

And on another occasion,—continues Ja far,— I went out in order to buy aubergines (*binjal*), and could not find good ones except in the shop of a man who proved to be the greatest villain that I have ever seen He kept me bargaining for a couple of hours, and when I ultimately bought from him what I needed, I began to count out the money to him But whatever coin I gave him, he would return it, saying that this was base and that was worn He was merely trying to annoy me, and I only realised this after a time When he saw that I had understood his trick, he jumped at me, and began to shout, collecting a crowd, and calling me a *rāfidī* (heretic) He scratched my cheeks, hit my sides, struck me in the face, and I had a considerable struggle to get rid of him Much later on, adds Ja far when I arrived to Ifrīqiyya after it was conquered by al Mahdī it was once reported that a certain man in Qastiliyya seizing the opportunity of the flight of its ruler Ziyādatu'l lāh, had collected around him a band, and occupied the town And the Imam sent a governor to that town, who arrested the rebel, and sent him to al-Mahdī, to Raqqāda When the rebel was brought, the Imam said to me 'Come out and ask him what made him to rise in rebellion ? I went out to see him, and, to my surprise, I saw before me the man who had sold me the aubergines! I returned to al-Mahdī, and reported this to him He smiled, and said Praise be to God who has delivered him to thy revenge! Go and behead him, the curse of God be upon him!"— And I went to the Qayrawān gate, taking him with me, and then beheaded him, and crucified him

So,— continuing the original narrative,— we spent a few days in Tūzar before the '*īd* and left after offering our prayers

on that day. We asked al-Mahdī to stay longer, so as to spend the holiday, and leave on the second day, but he did not agree. The leader and all other people in the caravan tried to do their best to help him, because the leader praised him and his generosity very much. Then al-Mahdī went with the guide and the caravan, in response to what was his duty in his high Mission. We went across the desert directly to Sijilmāsa, becoming exceedingly tired on that day, because al-Mahdī did not give permission to the guide to call a halt. Every one was suffering immensely from fatigue, and reproached the guide. But the latter told all that if [**119**] Abū Muḥammad (i.e. al-Mahdī) so commanded him, he would not give orders to camp even so long as they had not reached Sijilmāsa, so as not to disobey him. So, we marched on until night, and when we camped, the Imam said to us: "To-day a messenger with orders for our arrest has arrived in Tūzar". And so it had really happened.

Then al-Mahdī asked the guide as to how much they had done that day; and the man answered that they had travelled four stages. (Next day) we also did not halt until we reached Sijilmāsa. The governor of that place was Alīsa' b. Midrār, a Berber.

Before entering Sijilmāsa, al-Mahdī met a man, of decent appearance and manners, who had a son with him, and was travelling on account of some trade affairs. When they were riding together, al-Mahdī asked him about his name, place of origin, etc., and he replied that he was a Muṭṭalibī [1], from Qayrawān. Al-Mahdī was carrying on a conversation with him, and became friendly with him, and liked him, finding him to be a Shi'ite by persuasion. He carefully examined him, and, being satisfied with his beliefs, he accepted him as one of his followers (*akhadha 'alay-hi*). When we arrived in Sijilmāsa, we rented a good house for al-Mahdī from a man called Abū Ḥabasha.

[1] Apparently the same person as mentioned in the *Istitār* (106) under the name of Abū'l-Qāsim ibn Ḥassān. Cf. above, p. 182.

Says Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Yamānī: Ṭāhir, the cashier of the treasury, when by chance the subject of al-Mahdī's arrival in Sijilmāsa was touched upon in his presence, narrated to me the story which he heard from 'Alūsh, the trainer: "We were in the stables in Manṣūriyya [1],— said he,—"when suddenly there entered al-Mu'izz *li-dīni'l-lāh*, who was suffering from difficulty in breathing, caused by intense heat. He sat in a cool space, in which there was much air, looking at the horses in the stables. After he had rested for some time, there entered Ja'far the Chamberlain; al-Mu'izz asked him, what had happened that he came out at such an unusual hour? He replied that it was reported to him that Mawlā-nā the Imam had gone out of the private part of the palace to the stables, and he knew that this the Imam would not do at this time of the day except on account of his suffering from suffocation. So he had come to distract and console him. The Imam said that he had really come out on account of the heat, to find a refuge in a spacious and airy place such as his stables, and to enjoy the sight of his horses.

Then Ja'far asked permission to relate to him an extraordinary occasion of which he himself was a witness, while staying with al-Mahdī in Sijilmāsa, so that while listening to it, the Imam might feel less his sufferings from the heat. The Imam gave him permission, and he said: "We lived in Sijilmāsa in the house known as the house of Abū Ḥabasha, and near it there was a garden, which was entered through a door in the house. On an extremely hot summer day, just such as this one, al-Mahdī [120] was feeling great discomfort. He ordered us to open the door of the garden, and to spread a carpet in an airy place, so that he might sit in the extreme heat of that day. We opened the door of the garden, searched for a suitable place, and found a huge tree under which was a large shaded place. We spread for him a carpet there, and he came with al-Qā'im, and

[1] A suburban 'cantonment' near Qayrawān, built by al-Manṣūr.

both sat under the tree. Qā'im went later on for a walk in the garden, accompanied by some servants, and by chance came across a stream in which there was a very little water. So he sat down by its side, washed his hands and face, and put his feet into the water. And no sooner had he put his feet into the stream than water began to flow in it, rapidly increasing in volume. The gardener, who saw this, suddenly started shouting: "by God, the Mahdī is before me!" Al-Mahdī gave orders to look who was shouting there, and to bring the man before him. We all rushed to the gardener, and brought him to the Imam, making him cease shouting. Al-Mahdī asked him, why should he so foolishly expose them to a mortal danger? How did he find that he is the Mahdī? Is he not a spy to watch them? — To this the gardener replied that in his garden there was a spring, in which there was almost no water. And it was predicted from antiquity that its water would not run again until the Mahdī entered the garden and put his feet into the stream, he himself, or his son [1]. "And to-day I saw with my own eyes what was thus predicted".

Al-Mahdī told him that if he saw this, he should keep quiet, and not risk their lives foolishly. "No, by God",— replied the gardener,—"if I could conceal thee, my lord, in my body, and cover thee with my eyelids,— verily I would do this! But I have to ask thee for something". And when al-Mahdī asked him what it was, he said that the garden belonged to his father and grandfather, who inherited it from their ancestors. But recently Alīsa' b. Midrār (the governor of Sijilmāsa) had seized it from his family, leaving them to work in it as paid labourers. As he was certain that al-Mahdī would win the authority, he asked to return this garden to him. This was promised by al--Mahdī, and the man was dismissed with good presents and the order to keep silence about what he had seen. The man really kept silence to the day of al-Mahdī's triumph, after the arrival

[1] Cf. above, p. 50 sq. The last words are an obvious after-thought of the compiler.

of the troops of Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh, a large force which defeated the governor,— the events which are narrated later on in this book. He came to the camp of Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh, and was staying in the tents which were prepared for him, and for the ceremony of the taking of the oath of allegiance from the members of the Katāma tribe,— arranged as described later on in these pages,— after the flight of Alīsa' b. Midrār. And here was our gardener, standing near the door of the tent, [121] and shouting at the top of his voice: "Here is God and Imam al-Mahdī!" On hearing this, al-Mahdī at once recognised his voice, and told me to come out, give him some present, and arrange about the return of the garden to him, adding to it the gardens that adjoined it".

Al-Mu'izz *li-dīni'l-lāh*, hearing this, expressed his admiration. He liked the story very much, and always remembered it afterwards.

In Sijilmāsa,— Ja'far continues his original story,— al-Mahdī became very friendly with the Muṭṭalibite, speaking often to him, inviting him to meals, and confiding to him various things. When he had finished his trade affairs in the town, he came to say good bye to al-Mahdī before returning to his native Qayrawān. Al-Mahdī said to him that he would not let him go at such a time, if he did not know how great dangers were ahead for his followers and servants, and generally for every one who knew him, and whom he knew. And, under the circumstances as they were, he advised him to go, with the help of God; and when he heard that the *dā'ī* of the Katāma territory had conquered the province of Ifrīqiyya, seized Qayrawān, and entered the town of Raqqāda, he was to go to him, and convey to the *dā'ī* his, al-Mahdī's greetings, and introduce himself to him. The Imam promised to write to the *dā'ī* about him, and give necessary instructions. And if he saw that the *dā'ī* intended to move towards Sijilmāsa, he should come with him, sending his son with the *dā'ī*. This son was a youth at that time, who had just got his moustache.

Ja'far continues:—"The purpose of sending the Muṭṭalibite to Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh ash-Shī'ī was al-Mahdī's desire to have him there for his own identification, because the *dā'ī* had never personally met the Imam. His own story runs as follows: he was a Ṣūfī, living near the *dā'ī* of Kūfa, Abū 'Alī, with his brother Abū'l-'Abbās Muḥammad. His full name was Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh Ḥusayn b. Aḥmad b. Zakariyā. His brother Abū'l-'Abbās was elder than he; both were Shi'ites by persuasion. When they learnt about the transfer of Abū 'Alī to Egypt, they applied to the father-in-law of the latter, Fīrūz, and both were received with honour (into the sect), for their piety and strong Shi'ite feelings. They never saw the Imam (before that), and never came into his presence. Fīrūz asked the Imam about them, after the latter had accepted them (*akhadha 'alay-himā*), and had given them tuition and instruction in theology, suggesting to the Imam that Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh should be sent to Egypt, and thence to the *dā'ī* Abū'l-Qāsim in the Yemen, as an assistant in his propaganda. His brother Abū'l-'Abbās should be sent to the resident (*qā'im*) in Egypt [1], together with Abū 'Alī who was sent as a *dā'ī* there. The Imam accepted his suggestions, and sanctioned these appointments. Therefore Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh was sent from Egypt to the Yemen, and his brother remained in Egypt, with Abū 'Alī. Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh did not stay long in the Yemen, because Abū'l-Qāsim did not need his services. Thus his expectations of a distinguished career came to an end, when [122] the Imam wrote to Abū'l-Qāsim, ordering him to send him back to Egypt. But when he came to Mekka, he came across a number of people belonging to the Katāma tribe (in Africa). He travelled to Egypt in their company, and then continued his journey to their country in the Maghrib, with the permission of the Imam, whom he, however, thus had no chance to see.

[1] Apparently *qā'im* in this sense is used for the *ḥujjat*. The reference is extremely interesting as implying the fact that by about the middle of the third/ninth c. there were already many Ismailis in Egypt.

His brother, Abū'l-'Abbās, served under Abū 'Alī in Egypt, and was used for the purpose of conveying his correspondence with the Imam through Fīrūz. He ultimately asked the latter, after a long period of service, to ask the Imam about his being taken into his personal service. The Imam granted his demand, accepting him "from behind a curtain" (i.e. without the right to appear before him personally?)[1]. But later on "the curtain" was lifted before him, and he saw the Imam, and also al-Mahdī with al-Qā'im, who was an infant at that time.

To return to the interrupted story,— continues Ja'far,— the departure of the Muṭṭalibite. He took his farewell of al-Mahdī, and went to Qayrawān. At that time al-Mahdī ordered me to buy a slave, originally a man from Damascus, who at that time had come to Sijilmāsa. He was a handsome looking young man, and al-Mahdī named him Ṣandal[2]. He was the same man who fell in a battle, fighting under al-Qā'im in the Katāma country during the rebellion of al-Māwaṭī, who rose in arms after the arrival of al-Mahdī at Raqqāda. He was a brave man, and God has given him the death of the warrior.

Then al-Mahdī also ordered to me to buy another slave, a Greek[3], for the service to al-Qā'im, and I bought a Greek goldsmith, from a Sijilmāsa woman. He was named Muslim.

Verily, al-Mahdī foresaw what calamities were going to befall us, and for this reason he made arrangements in order to be properly served, with al-Qā'im (after we, his old servants, were imprisoned).

[1] It is a conjectural translation: it would be interesting to find a detailed explanation of the term. The implications of "the curtain" apparently refer to the revealing of the residence and person of the Imam. The next sentence also has interesting implications: here again "*al-Imām*" obviously is the guardian of al-Mahdī, who, most probably, as we have seen above, died *ca.* 283/896. If so, it is obvious that Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh was already in the Maghrib by this time.

[2] As is known, slaves usually received the names of precious stones or flowers.

[3] This may also imply that he was a native of Asia Minor, or even Italy.

When we were arrested, al-Qā'im escaped from the house in which al-Mahdī was staying, and settled in another house, and his father sent with him Muslim, the slave, to serve him, and to keep him company. Ṣandal remained with al-Mahdī in the house which he occupied originally.

We were thrown into prison,— I, Ṭayyib, and Abū Ya'qūb al-Qahramān. Al-Mahdī used every day to send Ṣandal to bring him news about al-Qā'im and about ourselves, sending by him food for us. Both al-Mahdī and al-Qā'im were staying in their houses, being treated with respect, and feeling no need,— God had laid respectful fear of them in the heart of the local governor, and reverence in his soul. But, at the same time, he was extremely brutal to us, torturing us every day by flogging with whips. After some time Abū Ya'qūb al-Qahramān was unable to endure it, and betrayed al-Mahdī. [123]

And I remember,— continues Ja'far,— that on the day when he confessed, after we were brought back to the prison, I hit him with my fist and said to him: "O thou, son of the uncircumcised! Why hast thou made confession?" And he replied: "Friend, the pain of the lashes made me do so."

Both my friends made confession, after a few days of torture, and were left in peace, while I was still tortured, because I refused to make the confession. It is true, Ṭayyib did not tell everything; he, nevertheless, when being flogged for a long time, shouted: "You, men, if all that people say about us is true in your opinion, kill us, and let us be free from the torture." But I did not utter any treasonable word, and this made them furious. They flogged me with lashes, and struck sharpened sticks under my nails, in anger that I said nothing, and to make me confess.

God by His mercy made me strong to endure all this. And, by God, I remember that I felt terrible thirst one day while in the prison. The water carrier, who usually supplied us with water, failed to bring it on that day. So I called the warder of the prison, beseeching him to give me to drink, nearly a

hundred times. His only answer after all this was to throw a stone at me, breaking my teeth; so I had to drink the blood streaming from my mouth. In their cruelty, they placed us in the prison latrine, and, as there was not much room in it, we had when sleeping to put our faces upon the stones on which people place their feet. But God relieved us from all this, at last.

In 296/908–909 Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh conquered Ifrīqiyya, and remained there for about three months to set the administrative machinery in motion. Then he marched towards Sijilmāsa, to relieve al-Mahdī. He appointed as the governors of the province Abū Zākī Tamām b. Mu'ārik al-Asjānī, or an-Nā'ilī, and his own brother, Abū'l-'Abbās Muḥammad b. Aḥmad.

Ja'far b. 'Ubayd arrived with the ladies of the family of al-Mahdī, either shortly before, or soon after the latter occupied Raqqāda. The humble slave of the Imams, the compiler of the book, feels doubt on this point, because much time has elapsed since he heard this story.

Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh,— continues Ja'far,— marched at the head of a large army towards Sijilmāsa, accompanied by Abū'l--Qāsim al-Muttalibī. He had already received letters of al-Mahdī in which he recommended the Muttalibite to him, ordering to protect and take care of him, to treat him well, and exempt him from the *'ushr* tax, and from all duties and taxes on his goods. He was to regard the father and the son as occupying a high rank, treating them with respect and distinction, attaching them to his staff, and he was to bring with him the son when marching to Sijilmāsa, recommending his father, who remained in Ifrīqiyya, to the governor in the same way as ordered by al--Mahdī. [124] Accordingly, Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh brought with him to Sijilmāsa Abū'l-Qāsim b. al-Muttalibī, acting as ordered by al-Mahdī.

On reaching the town, he besieged it, and sent an ultimatum to the governor, Alīsa' b. Midrār, demanding the release of al-

-Mahdī[1]. He promised to spare the town, if his demands were complied with. But the governor in the first instance refused the demand of Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh, and attacked him. Then the *dā'ī* started hostile actions, and encircled the town with his troops, after a fierce fight.

Realising his helplessness to resist, the governor summoned his assistants to confer, and discuss the situation. Some of his advisers recommended to him the execution of all suspects who were arrested: if they were associates of the insurgents, this would split their unity, shatter their religious beliefs, and render false their dogmas. Another party advocated a friendly settlement, urging the governor to comply with the request of the enemy. As they pointed out, the insurgents only demanded the surrender of the prisoners,— if these really were the people whom they wanted. If their demand was satisfied, they would not ask for anything more, seeing this friendly attitude towards them.

There was also in the town,— says Ja'far,— a man under suspicion of complicity in the same thing (i.e. the Ismaili propaganda),— a merchant, Ibn Bisṭām by name. The fact was that other merchants envied his wealth, and disliked him for his base mentality, planning to get rid of him, and ruin him. They came to Alīsa', and persuaded him that the enemy did not demand the men who were being tortured, but this Ibn Bisṭām. The latter was summoned, and this turned the suspicions of the governor from us, and our tortures were suspended.

But let us return to the deliberations of the governor's council. Some of his advisers, on whose opinion he usually relied,— and their suggestions carried the day,— argued that, being surrounded on all sides, they could not continue resistance. If the prisoners were killed, then the assailants would surely slaughter all the defenders. Therefore the best course would be to release the suspects, and send them out to the insurgents, one by one. When the enemy saw the man whom they expected,

[1] Cf. the Texts, pp. 31–33, and 44–46, the version given in the *Sharḥu'l-akhbār*, and the *Iftitāḥu'd-da'wa*.

they would busy themselves with him, turning their attention from the governor and his force, who would have an opportunity to escape. Besides, after getting the people whom the besiegers demanded, they would be unable to plan anything except for a hurried withdrawal to Ifrīqiyya, fearing lest Ziyādatu'l-lāh b. al-Aghlab, who had fled before them, might return there, on receiving the news that they had gone to Sijilmāsa; and, collecting his Arabs, while they were far away, might re-install himself there, making things difficult for the insurgents. And when they departed, carrying with them their man, the governor and the force might return to the town. [125]

So it was ultimately decided to send out Ibn Bisṭām, the merchant, whom other merchants had slandered to the governor. He was sent out to Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh. When the latter saw him approaching, he dismounted from his horse, thinking that this was al-Mahdī. And Ibn Bisṭām also dismounted, out of respect for Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh. On seeing this, the latter mounted again, and did not pay any more attention to him. He then summoned Abū'l-Qāsim, the son of al-Muṭṭalibī (mentioned above), and ordered him to remain in attendance at his side, because that was why the Imam had sent him. If Abū'l-Qāsim had been with him from the beginning, he would have never dismounted to greet an ordinary man.

This happened,— adds Ja'far,— because Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh had never seen al-Mahdī personally, and could not recognise him, as mentioned above. He came to Africa being sent by Abū'l--Qāsim, the *dā'ī* of the Yemen, who also sent with him a certain Ibn Abī Malāḥif, a Yamanite. He met some Katāma tribesmen in Mekka, travelled with them to Egypt, and, after many adventures, came to the Maghrib. It would be too long to relate all this here. The story is narrated by Qāḍī an-Nu'mān b. Muḥammad in the book compiled by him about the origin of the Fatimid empire [1].

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[1] This is the *Iftitāḥu'd-da'wa*. The most interesting implication is that the original *Sīra* of Ibn Ḥawshab, from which extracts are preserved

Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh remained in the Katāma country until his dream was fulfilled,— he saw al-Mahdī whom he had never seen before with his own eyes. It was for this purpose that al-Mahdī commanded him to bring with him the son of al-Muṭṭalibī who might show him the Imam whom he had had the chance to see while with his father in Sijilmāsa where he swore allegiance to the Imam.

But let us return to the story of Ibn Bisṭām and al-Mahdī. When Ibn Bisṭām dismounted, he stopped at the feet of the horse of Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh, congratulating him on the victory, and bringing him the news that al-Mahdī was safe, with al-Qā'im.

When the population of Sijilmāsa with their governor saw that their enemy paid no attention to Ibn Bisṭām, their sorrow was great. The governor then sent a bay horse to al-Mahdī, ordering him to ride out from the town to the enemy, if these people were his associates. Al-Mahdī,— narrates Ja'far,— rode out in the same dress in which he had remained in his house,— a Dabīqī dress, Yathrib shirt, and broad turban, the tail of which he spread over his shoulders. On his feet were Arab sandals.

When he emerged from (the gate of) Sijilmāsa, and approached the besiegers near enough for those who were waiting for him to be able to recognise him, the son of al-Muṭṭalibī said to Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh: "Here is the Lord, mine and thine, and the Lord of all peoples". Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh dismounted, and so did all his troops. He bowed, and the others bowed. He stepped forward, and his troops did the same, bowing as he was bowing, until he prostrated before the hoofs of al-Mahdī's horse. Then he rose, and kissed the stirrup [**126**] of the Imam, being unable to say anything under the influence of emotion. Then al-Mahdī raised his head with his own hand, and, bending towards him, said: "Be gladdened, Ḥusayn, at this auspicious event." But Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh burst in tears, being unable to

in the *Iftitāḥ*, obviously was not known to the author. Thus, most probably, it was lost at an early period.

say anything, overcome by his feelings of awe before al-Mahdī, and his great joy.

Then al-Mahdī, smiling, praising God, and thanking Him, ordered Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh to give him his horse,— the grey one, which he was riding on that occasion. Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh ran swift, took the reins of the horse from the hands of the servant, and personally led it up, bringing it beside the horse which al-Mahdī was riding. Then the Imam took his foot from the stirrup, set it in the stirrup of Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh's horse, and leapt upon it, turning its head towards the town.

Ja'far said that about all these events he heard from Abū'l--Qāsim b. al-Muttalibī. He (certainly) could not witness all this because at the time he was still in the prison.

The people rushed to greet al-Mahdī, crowding round him, and striving to have a glimpse of him, jubilant at seeing him. In the excitement of the moment Alīsa' b. Midrār, with his associates, fled from the town under the noses of the troops, escaping towards the desert, in the direction of "Ṣanhāja of the Unbelievers", a province lying at the entrance to the Maghrib, originally called "Ṣanhāja of the Muslims", where Zayrī and his son were hiding [1].

(When the report of the governor's flight was received) al--Mahdī ordered Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh to occupy the town. The *dā'ī* turned towards his troops, and said:—"Take it". Before even he had finished his command, the troops rushed upon the town from all sides, and at once occupied it. They looted it, and broke into the prison, looting it also. We,— says Ja'far,— were also plundered together with the other prisoners.

Al-Mahdī ordered Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh to search for al-Qā'im, and to send someone to release his servants from the prison, ordering them to point out his hiding place to the messengers.

Ja'far continues:—"When the prison was broken into, and we were plundered, we came out naked, roaming about the streets,

[1] The dynasty of Zayrids ruled in 362–543/972–1148, in Tunis.

and lanes. Ṭayyib incidentally picked up an old white burnus, and we divided it between ourselves. Ascending the roof of a house, we three,— myself, Ṭayyib, and Abū Ya'qūb al-Qahramān,— saw the parties of the Katāma horsemen who were moving up and down in the town. Later on we came to know that they were searching for us in the prison, and, not having found us there, were greatly upset at being unable to trace us, or recognise us. Thus they could not take us with themselves to the hiding place of al-Qā'im.

Suddenly Ṭayyib said:—"By God, I do not think that these horsemen would move to and fro except in search of al-Qā'im. I am sure he is not yet [127] with his father. Let me ask them." So, when one of these parties approached us, we shouted to them: "Brothers, we are servants of our Lord al-Mahdī, who were imprisoned and tortured. If Mawlā-nā al-Mahdī has not yet found his son, Abū'l-Qāsim, and if it is he who sent you to search for him, we can show you his place. Take us with you, and we will point it out."

As soon as the Katāmites heard this, they rushed towards us, gave us three cloaks and three turbans, seated us on their horses, and we went with them until we saw the door of the house in which al-Qā'im was hiding. We began to shout "Muslim", or "Ṣandal", but there was no reply. When al-Mahdī departed, on his ride out to Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh, Ṣandal had come to our prison to tell us about this. We told him to hurry to our lord Abū'l-Qāsim (i.e. al-Qā'im), to inform him, and to remain with him. He went, and both he and Muslim remained there on that day.

We stood long before the door of the house, shouting for Muslim or Ṣandal, but there was no reply. We began to feel afraid that the Katāma men might suspect a fraud, and slaughter us on the spot. Then I and Ṭayyib began to shout: "Our Lord, Abū'l-Qāsim, open the door for us, and come out. We are thy slaves, with Katāma tribesmen, thy friends. God has given a victory to our Lord al-Mahdī, fulfilling predictions and promises.

Our Lord al-Mahdī is searching for thee the whole day, never dismounting from his horse. Come out to us!"

When al-Qā'im heard this, he, still doubting what Ṭayyib shouted, asked me: "Ja'far, is Ṭayyib with thee?"—"Yes, Oh! Our Lord!"— shouted I,—"open the door". But as soon as the Katāma tribesmen heard his voice, they rushed to break the door, jumped upon the walls, broke into the house to him, and carried him out on their shoulders. They offered him the best horse that they had with them, and galloped with him to the camp, quite forgetting about us, and leaving us in distress. There were three of us, at the beginning, and now there were five,— I, Ṭayyib, Abū Ya'qūb, Muslim, and Sandal. We were discussing the situation, and what we should do. Some expressed the opinion that we should go to the camp. I opposed this, arguing that if we approached the camp, we could not be certain when near it that the tribesmen would not come out, suspecting us to be enemies. They do not understand well Arabic, do not know us, or realise that we are servants of al-Mahdī. Even if we tell this to them, they may disbelieve us, and kill us. The best plan will be to return to the house in which al-Mahdī used to reside. When he sees al-Qā'im safe, he will surely take steps to find us. And he surely will expect to find us in his house, guarding the property that was left by him there. [128]

The Katāma tribesmen pillaged the whole of the town, except for the houses in which al-Mahdī was residing, and the other in which al-Qā'im was hiding. Verily, God blinded them with regard to these two houses. Ṣandal suggested we should carry the things found in al-Qā'im's house to the house of al--Mahdī, so that all should be in one place. We did this, collecting everything in that house.

When visiting us in the prison, Ṣandal told us that before leaving the house, al-Mahdī had ordered him to put everything in the house into the cellars which it possessed,— clothes, carpets, various articles. He himself supervised the packing, to be sure that everything is done properly. And it was not

until everything was picked and the entrances closed, that the messengers of the governor came, summoning him to go to Abū 'Abdi'l lāh

We sat in the entrance porch of the house, while a great multitude of people sought refuge with us, the inhabitants of Sijilmāsa — men women children, wounded and sound all clothed in rags They begged us to protect them despairing of their lives Time passed, (and night fell) and it was not before one third of night was over that we suddenly heard a great uproar and the sound of the hoofs made by the horses of cavalry It was a large party of about a hundred horsemen who were coming by the light of torches, moving towards the house and led by local people who showed them the way to us

Our Lord al Mahdi repeatedly sent men in search of us after the return of al-Qā im Abū Abdi'l lāh all the time sent parties, one after another, and they searched for us in the house which was occupied by al Qā im before he joined his father None of the inhabitants of Sijilmasa came to tell us that they were looking for us nor did they direct them to the place where we were The tribesmen went and returned to Abū Abdi'l lāh reporting their inability to find us Then al Mahdī told Abu 'Abdi'l lāh to order them to make inquiries from the local inhabitants about the house which was his residence saying that the servants might be expected to be there A search party returned to the town, asked the local inhabitants about the house and were led thither by them

Seeing them approaching our house, we rose and went to meet them We saw amongst them a Saqlābī slave whom they obeyed with respect He was a slave of Abū 'Abdi l lāh who on that day had presented him to al Mahdī He was called al Īkijāni, because he was purchased by his master at Īkijān, the [129] town in the Katāma country in which he at that time resided soon after he came there The party dismounted, and embraced us, after coming into the entrance porch of the house They remained there, while the (personal) servant entered the

house with us. He asked each of us his name, so we introduced ourselves, and inquired about his name. He said, that, thanks to God, he had become one of us because he was presented to al-Mahdī by his master, *mawlā as-sayyid*, as in the Katāma country they used to style Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh, the *dā'ī*.

We brought out from the house everything that could be taken away,— luggage, personal belongings, clothes, etc., and loaded the animals with this. Horses were allotted to us, and we rode down to the encampment. On arriving there we found Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh mounted on his horse, awaiting us. It was the order of al-Mahdī, who himself was staying in the tent pitched for him by the *dā'ī*; he entered it only after he saw al-Qā'im returned to him, safely brought by the tribesmen.

When Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh saw us approaching, he dismounted, and we similarly dismounted, and embraced him one after another, while the Īkijānī slave was introducing every one of us to him, mentioning his name. He said: "I swear by the head of al-Mahdī that he has given me the power to achieve what he desired, and this is how I accomplished this". He made me to uncover my back, and touched the wounds inflicted by flogging, my deformed fingers, and the eyes. Then he did the same to Ṭayyib, touching his back and the eyes. But he paid no attention to Abū Ya'qūb. After this he took us to the tent of the Imam, at the entrance to which al-Qā'im was standing, awaiting us,— looking like a moon. When he saw us, he smiled and congratulated us, and then took us into the tent, before al-Mahdī.

We saw al-Mahdī sitting on a raised platform in the middle of the tent, shining as the sun in his gorgeous apparel. We prostrated ourselves, weeping, and he, smiling, knelt to God, praising Him, thanking Him, and glorifying Him,— blessed be His name. Then he ordered Ṣandal to produce from a certain box the two dresses of honour which he had packed there. The slave brought these, and al-Mahdī put one on himself, ordering al-Qā'im to do the same with the other. Then he ordered [**130**] other dresses and swords to be brought, which were also

kept packed. Then he put with his own hand the dress of honour on Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh, also giving him a turban and a sword, and then did the same to myself. He made me to put on the dress lined with *Dabīqī* stuff, also a turban, trousers, and boots. He also gave me a sword. Then he gave dresses and swords to all others,— Ṭayyib, Muslim, Ṣandal, and Abū Ya'qūb. All these articles he had really had ready for us ever since the time when we left Salamiyya.

Then he ordered to Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh to pitch another large tent for himself and for us. This he did, and al-Mahdī sent expensive carpets to spread in it.

Then the Imam ordered Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh to tell his men to parade next morning for the salutation of al-Mahdī. They should be introduced to the Imam by the *dā'ī* according to their rank and position. To this Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh replied that his men being rough, were all too anxious to have a look at the Imam (so that they would not be easily managed on the occasion). So it would be better to instruct them to look from a distance at the Imam who might sit in an open tent (*samā'*). He, Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh, might stand in front of them, leading up for introduction those who were entitled to this, by tens, presenting them to the Imam. They might greet him, and then depart. When all the *dā'īs* had been presented in this way, and also *qā'ids*, the functionaries of the lower rank would be introduced by fifties. Still lower ranks in hundreds, and in five hundreds. Then he intended to march the rank and file of the troops before the Imam in squadrons so that all of them could have a look at him, and perform the ceremony of greeting [1].

Ja'far continues: al-Mahdī pointed me out to Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh, appointing me to assist him. Next morning al-Mahdī sat on a throne, placed in an open tent. He was in gorgeous attire,—

[1] The ceremony described here in detail is not mentioned in the *Iftitāḥu'd-da'wa*, or by non-Ismaili historians. It would be interesting to find out whether in reality it was held when al-Mahdī subsequently reached Raqqāda, where he was proclaimed the caliph.

as if the sun was rising from his face. On his right was standing al-Qā'im, armed with a sword, standing close to the throne, as resplendent as a moon. Further on, on the right, at the distance of two paces, was standing Ṭayyib. On the left, at a distance of two paces from the throne, was standing Muslim, and behind the throne were standing Abū Ya'qūb, the new slave, and Ṣandal, on the left and the right, holding fans in their hands, and moving these over the head of al-Mahdī. I, Ja'far, was standing at the entrance of the open tent (*samā'*), with my sword in my hand. Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh was standing at the distance of about a hundred yards from the entrance, assisted by a thousand guards, who were standing in two rows. He called out by name all the *dā'īs* and *qā'ids*, sending them in batches of ten. As soon as ten of them had come together, he would instruct them to go and present themselves to the chamberlain standing at the entrance, and not to say [131] whatever they might choose, when brought before al-Mahdī, but to greet him, and offer prayers to God for our Lord. And when the latter made them a sign to go, they were to depart.

Said Ja'far: it was since that day that I was called the chamberlain.

I conducted the officers in tens, and was the first amongst the servants to congratulate al-Mahdī on the occasion of his assumption of the title of the caliph [1]. When (the first batch) finished uttering their greetings and benedictions, the Imam blessed them, thanking them for their devotion, and explaining to them how God would count this, repaying it with the greatest rewards, in this world and the next.

We spent in this occupation the whole of that day, and after this al-Mahdī had to sit three days more before the ceremony ended. I was busy with this when the news came of the arrest of Alīsa' b. Midrār. This gladdened al-Mahdī very much, and the camp resounded with the shouts of joy and thanks to God.

[1] This clearly indicates that in fact the ceremony was that of the proclamation of al-Mahdī as caliph. Cf. the preceding foot-note.

When the governor was brought, al-Mahdī ordered him to be flogged together with his associates, and his property to be confiscated. After that they were to be executed, except for the governor himself, al-Qā'im prayed that his life be spared, and the Imam granted this to him [1]. But he lived only a few days after the execution, suffering from flogging so much that he could not either eat or drink, and died, while no one prayed God to forgive him.

Al-Mahdī then marched at the head of a huge army, such as no king before him could ever muster, and ultimately reached the Katāma country. I remember,— said Ja'far,— that when we were passing through the Ṣanhāja country. and were marching near the place in which (later on) was founded the town of Ashīr, al-Mahdī asked the name of the hills that appeared before him. He was told that the name of the range was Jabal Ṣanhāja. And he said that a treasure was buried in these mountains.

Says Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Yamānī. the compiler of this book: I never heard this (later) story from Ja'far himself, but it was related to me, on his authority, in Egypt. a short time after his death.

Let us return to the story of al-Mahdī's arrival in the Katāma country. He took possession of the sums of money which were collected for him, and marched to the province of Ifrīqiyya. in 297/909-910. All the notables of the province, both Arabs and non-Arabs. without exception. and many ordinary people came out to receive him, on the day of his arrival there But al-Muttalibī and al-Marwardī came out from Qayrawān as far as Tāhart, in twenty days' distance, to meet him. In Bāghāya, at a distance of six days, he was met by many people who claimed to be descendants of Ḥusayn. or Ja'far, and who held Shi'ite beliefs in Qayrawān. [132]

[1] Apparently this leniency was dictated by considerations of the governor's tribal connections with the Berbers.

When al-Mahdī entered the province of Ifrīqiyya,— continued Ja'far,— he made a proclamation. promising an amnesty to every one there, and in other towns; even 'Abdu'l-lāh ibn al-Qadīm and Ayyūb, who was the deputy of Ziyādatu'l-lāh at the time of al-Mahdī's occupation of the province, came under it. Both, being informed of this, made their appearance. This Ayyūb was one of the most eminent officials under the Aghlabid rule.

'Abdu'l-lāh b. al-Qadīm was given an important post by al-Mahdī, who appointed him to be in charge of all revenue offices and tax collectors. He continued in his high office until Satan confused his soul, and he joined the Katāma insurrection, and (ultimately) committed suicide.

There was also a certain Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Baghdādī who came from Andalusia before al-Mahdī occupied Ifrīqiyya. He came into favour with certain administrators whom he served, and was appointed as a secretary in the government office when al-Mahdī arrived. The latter left him to continue in charge of the revenue department, and ultimately he succeeded Ibn al-Qadīm in his office. He was ultimately entrusted with general administration, being in charge of every thing, both important and other affairs.

The reason of his brilliant career,— said Ja'far,— was this. While we were in Sijilmāsa, he once appeared before al-Mahdī, and offered to him a laudatory ode (*qaṣīda*). Through this he found his way to al-Mahdī, whom he pleased by his eulogy, so that he ordered him to appear before him, and ask what he needed. He used to visit al-Mahdī, eulogizing him in his odes. Once al-Mahdī asked him the reason of his departure from Baghdād, and he explained that 'Alī ibn 'Īsā [1], out of envy intended to kill him. Therefore he fled in despair of his life, and various circumṣtances brought him to that country,— the

[1] The *wazīr* of several Abbasid caliphs, born in 245/859, d. 334/946. His full name was 'Alī b. 'Īsā b. Dā'ūd, surnamed Ibn al-Jarrāḥ.

Maghrib. Al-Mahdī carefully examined him, his (religious) views, and his qualifications, and found him an excellent secretary, intelligent, clear minded, and firm,— a man who would make a good minister (*wazīr*). He initiated him (*akhadha 'alay-hi*), and ordered him to go back to Andalusia, saying that he would not let him go if he did not foresee great dangers which were threatening his servants and followers. He said that he ordered him to go only because he feared for his safety. But he was to make his way to Qayrawān as soon as he heard about the occupation of Ifrīqiyya by the *dā'ī* of the Katāma country. This was in fact done by Abū Ja'far al-Baghdādī, and he received various rewards from al-Mahdī, al-Qā'im, and al-Manṣūr which only they could know.

Later on,— adds Ja'far,— there arrived Abū Ja'far al-Jazarī and Ja'far al-Ḥājib surnamed Ṣu'lūk (my cousin, whom I used to call "brother"), bringing the ladies of al-Mahdī's family to Raqqāda, which at that time was the capital of al-Mahdī after [133] the occupation of Ifrīqiyya [1]. This gladdened al--Mahdī very much. He was established on his throne, and thus God had fulfilled His promise, despite the opposition of His enemies, and the enemies of His saints.

Praise be to God, the Lord of the worlds!

This is what has reached the knowledge of the humblest slave and servant of our lord and master, the Commander of the Faithful,— the prayers of God be upon him, his forefathers and descendants! These were the circumstances of the departure of al-Mahdī and al-Qā'im from Salamiyya, and their progress until they reached Raqqāda. I heard all this from the humble slave of our lord, Ja'far b. 'Alī, the Chamberlain,— the mercy of God be upon him,— when he had already forgotten many details by reason of the remoteness of the time, and the many misfortunes that had befallen him.

[1] Cf. above, p. 209 (p. 123 of the Text), where the re-union of the family is referred to.

Praise be to God, the First and the Last, the Apparent and the Hidden! Prayers be upon the best of those whom He sent to mankind, and upon the noblest of the heirs, Muḥammad, His Prophet and Saint, and on his Trustee 'Alī, with the Imams his descendants,— on all of them be salutation in the highest degrees!

3. From the *Iftitāḥu'd-da'wa wa ibtidā'u'd-dawla.*

(For the work and its author see above, pp. 6-7; for the text see Extract 3.)

1. *The Story of the Emigration of al-Mahdī from his Home in the East, and his Arrival in Sijilmāsa.*

[**40**] When the Imamat came to al-Mahdī, and the Imam who was his predecessor died,— the one who transferred his high office to him (he used to say to him: after my death thou shalt flee far away, meeting with many misfortunes and difficulties),— so, when God had taken him, and al-Mahdī had become the Imam after him, rumours about him spread widely, signs of his advent began to appear, and prophecies concerning him became clear to everyone as about to be fulfilled. He was in (constant) mortal danger from the Abbasids. Many things happened to him,— it would be too long to narrate and explain all of these,— many calamities, predicted to him by his predecessor. He finally left his place, himself, and the Imam, his son, al-Qā'im, who (later on) succeeded him. The latter at the time was a small boy, while al-Mahdī himself was a young man. In fulfilment of the true (predictions), he reached Egypt, expecting to proceed to the Yaman. A certain *dā'ī* (however) preceded him; he went there before him, and upset his plans.[1] He, the *dā'ī*, came to Abū'l-Qāsim, who was in charge of the preaching in the Yaman, trying to seduce him, but found him firm in his loyalty to the Imam. Therefore he left him, departing to his (Ibn Ḥawshab's) colleague, 'Alī b. al-Faḍl, who was residing in one of the districts of the Yaman. He succeeded in winning him over, and making him rebel. Therefore people used to say at

[1] Cf. above, p. 52 sq. The version differs from that of the *Sīra* of Ja'far (114-5) in details. The latter obviously has in view the Ismaili reader, while Qāḍī Nu'mān addresses it to the general public.

that time: "an 'Irāqī came to another 'Irāqī, trying to swindle him, but could not succeed. Then he approached a Yamanite, and deceived him"[1].

'Alī b. al-Faḍl ceased to obey the commands of God and His Men (i.e. the Imams), making lawful to his followers things unlawful, rejecting the prescribed forms of worship, and preaching depravity. When all this had become known to all, the man who had seduced him disowned him, acting as is narrated in the story of the cursed Iblīs (cf. Coran, VIII, 50): "he told the man to disobey God, and when he disobeyed, Iblīs said: I have no connection with [41] thee,—I fear God, the Lord of the Worlds". He offered armed resistance to Abū'l-Qāsim (Ibn Ḥawshab),— there were many things which it would be too long to relate,— and died in such state of utmost error and sinfulness.— may God give us refuge from similar dejectedness, error, and fall!

All that happened reached the knowledge of the Imam (i.e. al-Mahdī), who did not wish to go to the Yaman while the state of local affairs was such as described, and continued to reside in Egypt, in disguise, posing as a merchant. Meanwhile letters came from Baghdad to the governor of Egypt, giving al-Mahdī's description, and ordering his arrest. Similar orders came to his deputy (*'āmil*). One of the higher officials of the deputy governor was a faithful devotee (an Ismaili). He at once informed al-Mahdī, advising him to conceal himself. The Imam was grateful for his advice, and left Egypt, with his son al-Qā'im, and several slaves, carrying with him many camel loads of property. He bought with his money various goods, concealing cash in these, and travelled in a company of different

[1] Apparently this 'Alī b. al-Faḍl (al-Jayshānī, according to the *Sīra* of Ja'far, 113–115) is referred to by Tabari (III, 2256, footnote *c*) under the year 293/905, as leading successful operations against Ṣan'ā and other centres in the Yaman. It is not stated on whose side he was: al-Mahdī's, or was fighting against Ibn Ḥawshab. The words of the author: "he attacked Abū'l-Qāsim, " etc., may refer to this, if Ṣan'ā was already in the latter's hands.

people, as an ordinary merchant. Near Ṭāḥūna (i.e. a "mill") brigands attacked the caravan, looting many travellers. Much of what belonged to al-Mahdī was lost. The most important was the loss of the books, which contained certain matters belonging to the wisdom of the Imams.

When (later on) al-Qā'im bi-amri'l-lāh marched in his first campaign against Egypt, he caught the brigands who had attacked that caravan, seizing their loot, and regaining the original books. About this al-Mahdī used to say:—"Even if this campaign had been undertaken merely to regain these books, this would have been worth while. He was extremely pleased to have them back [1].

On the day of the raid upon the caravan of al-Mahdī, Abū'l-'Abbās Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. [42] Zakariyā, the brother of Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh, was wounded, while accompanying his Master. When the caravan reached Tripoli, the travellers dispersed. Every one saw that they, i.e. al-Mahdī and Abū'l-'Abbās, were companions, merchants. Abū'l-'Abbās, with some others, went to Qayrawān, with orders from al-Mahdī to join him in the Katāma territory to which he was himself going. There were with him several Katāma tribesmen who had been sent to the Imam before.

When Abū'l-'Abbās arrived in Qayrawān, letters containing description of al-Mahdī, and orders to arrest him reached Ziyādatu'l-lāh, after they, (as mentioned above) had missed the party in Egypt. Accordingly, Ziyādatu'l-lāh gave orders to collect information about al-Mahdī; and some of those who were travelling by the same caravan informed him that he had remained in Tripoli. They mentioned that Abū'l-'Abbās was one of his associates. He was arrested and tortured, but denied everything, stating that he was a merchant; he was imprisoned, and news about this reached al-Mahdī, who was still in Tripoli. He by chance got hold of a caravan leaving for

[1] The corresponding passage in the *Sīra* of Ja'far (115) is apparently based on these lines.

Qasṭīliyya, and left with it. The letter came to the local governor, from Ziyādatu'l-lāh, with his description and orders to seize him. Al-Mahdī, however, succeeded in gaining the favour of the local governor by gifts; the latter therefore replied that the person in question had already left, and had reached Qasṭīliyya. Al-Mahdī really reached the place, and spent there the 'Īd (i.e. one of the two great Muslim holidays).

There were in the same caravan with al-Mahdī different people from several towns in the Maghrib, from Dhāb, and Sijilmāsa. The destination of al-Mahdī was the province occupied by Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh. But when he heard that Abū'l-'Abbās had been arrested, and that he was known as one of his associates, he became afraid of going (directly) to his destination, because his going there would justify these suspicions, and he (Abū'l-'Abbās) would be killed. Therefore he abandoned his intention of joining Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh (at once), and went to Sijilmāsa. Having said his 'Īd prayers in Qasṭīliyya, he called one of his slaves, and said to him: "verily, my instinct (*nafs-ī*) and God have told me that I am being searched for". He ordered the slave to convey [43] to the leader of the caravan that, "having said our 'Īd prayers, we must start (immediately), and the more distance we can cover,— the better. If thou findst it possible to go with us at once, then do this".

The leader of the caravan was much feted by al-Mahdī with presents and gifts. And when his messenger reached him, he said that although this would be extremely disagreable to the travellers, yet he could not refuse the request of Abū Muḥammad (i.e. al-Mahdī). He struck the signal drum, and started, and others started after him. Next day arrived the messenger from Ziyādatu'l-lāh to the governor of Qasṭīliyya, with orders to seize al-Mahdī, but he had already left the province [1].

[1] The version of the *Sīra* differs only in the names of the places. It is quite obvious that Ja'far had his own information, and did not derive it from the *Iftitāh*.

God helped him, diverting their attempts from him, because He wished that his Mission, and what was written in the Sacred Book, should be complete to his death. He travelled on, reaching Sijilmāsa, where he settled. And every one whose eyes could see al-Mahdī wherever he came, in any city, if the man possessed reason and intelligence, would say of him:—"By God, he is not a merchant: surely, he must be a sultan, or one of the kings" [1]. And many of the people of Sijilmāsa used to say the same thing about him. It was his superiority to every one who came in contact with him, the dignity and greatness which God had put into the eye of every one who looked upon him.

At that time the governor of Sijilmāsa was Alīsa' b. Midrār. Al-Mahdī treated him generously with presents; therefore he paid him due respect, and treated him with courtesy. After it had been discovered that he had gone there, the letter arrived from Ziyādatu'l-lāh informing the governor that he, al-Mahdī, was the person in whose favour Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh was preaching. This fact completely altered the governor's attitude towards him. We shall narrate this in due course, if God wishes.

2. *The Story of the Departure of Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh to Sijilmāsa, and al-Mahdī's Exit from there.*

... [44] (Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh) was approaching Sijilmāsa, and the news of his advance reached Alīsa' b. Midrār, its governor, concerning his intentions. Ziyādatu'l-lāh had already written to him about al-Mahdī, giving his description, and stating that he was the person in whose favour Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh was preaching. The governor did not pay much attention to this. But when Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh advanced towards the town, he sent someone to ask him, i.e. al-Mahdī, about his descent, his business, and whether Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh's movement was in his favour. Al-Mahdī admitted his (Alid) descent, which it was impossible to deny, but gave an ambiguous answer concerning Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh,

[1] This is incorporated in the Qāḍī's other work, the *Sharḥu'l-akhbār* (cf. above, p. 64 sq.).

saying that he had never seen or known him. And it was true that he had never seen him,— we have already explained the story of his (Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh's) early career. Al-Mahdī insisted on stating that he was a merchant,— because he was afraid for his safety.

Finding him unwilling to proceed to Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh, and averse from the idea of entering the territory occupied by him, the governor accepted as satisfactory his statement concerning this, but took up his first statement (concerning his descent). God had put still greater respect for al-Mahdī into his heart, and admiration into his eyes; therefore he did not cause him more discomfort than to place him under "domestic arrest", under a guard. Similarly, he put his son, al-Qā'im bi-amri'l--lāh, into another house, so that they should remain separated, and the statements of both of them could be collated. But their statements were uniform . . . The governor submitted their servants to torture, trying to extort confession from them, but they only repeated what al-Mahdī and his son were saying.

News of this reached Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh, perplexing him very much. He used to say to his followers:—"God shall make manifest the mission of al-Mahdī by a great victory". He sent to Alīsa' b. Midrār several of his servants as messengers, with a letter, [45] assuring him of safety and kind treatment, and stating that he advanced for a certain transaction, not for an attack. He promised to the governor his personal favour, honour, and gratitude, with strong and sincere assurances. But when the messengers with his letter arrived, the governor, having learnt the contents, threw it away, and ordered the execution of the bearers, so that they were slain.

When the news of this reached Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh, he repeated the attempt, disregarding this act, out of fear of what might happen to al-Mahdī. He, however, did not refer to him, out of *taqiyya*. But the same thing happened with this second attempt. The governor was obstinate in his vileness. Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh repeated the attempt for the third time, disregarding his in-

tolerable acts. But God helped and protected his troops, and he approached the town.

The governor came out with his force against the invaders; but it was not long before Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh's cavalry chased them into the city after a short engagement, in which many of the defenders were slain. The night was approaching, and already dusk had fallen. The troops therefore withdrew, and camped where they stood. When night fell, Ibn Midrār escaped, with his nephews and other relatives. Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh and his men spent the night in great anxiety, not knowing what had been done with al-Mahdī. It was impossible for them to enter the town, and they did not know about the flight of the villain until the day dawned, and the notables of the place came out to them, informing them of what had happened. Then they entered the place in which al-Mahdī resided, and took him and al-Qā'im out. There was immense rejoicing amongst the troops, who were almost mad with joy. Two horses were brought for them, and they rode away. Their faithful followers crowded around, and the *dā'īs* surrounded them. Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh walked before the Imam, repeating:—"This is my Lord, [46] and your Lord, o faithful!" He offered thanks and praise to God, and wept from his great joy. Ultimately the Imam reached the camp, and entered a tent which had been prepared for him. He gave orders to find Alīsa' b. Midrār, and a party went out in search.

He stayed in his tent until past noon; then the commander of the camp prepared a place for him. (He came out), and the faithful crowded around him, listening with tears of joy to what he was saying, praising God for His having given them the chance to see him. And al-Mahdī thanked them, recognising their valour, saying that God had helped them greatly, rewarding them for their virtues. He gave them glad tidings of the attainment of complete success in this world and the life after death.

Then the *mu'adhdhins* shouted the call to the *maghrib* prayer. He stood up, and prayed with them, reciting the first (*rik'at*) with the *Fātiḥa*, and the *sūra ar-Ra'd*, and second with the

same *Fātiha*, and the *sūra* '*qul huwa'l-lāh ahad*'' Then he completed the prayer, and entered his tent, and the men dispersed [1].

[1] Details given in the *Sira* of Ja'far differ in some essential points But he himself admits that he was imprisoned at the time, and heard from others the circumstances in which al-Mahdi joined the forces of Abū Abdi l lāh It is quite possible also that he dramatised the story with the view of making his own part more prominent His version, however, is not incompatible with Qādi Nu'mān's, which is very much condensed, and most probably contains quite reliable information concerning some details

4. From the 17-th Chapter of the *Zahru'l-ma'ānī.*

(For the author and the work see above, pp. 22, 23; for the text see Extract 4.)

6. (Ismā'īl b. Ja'far.)

... [47] Then rose Ismā'īl b. Ja'far, the Blessed, the Divinely Protected (*al-Mubārak al-Maymūn*), brought up by his father.

He is the sixth amongst the Imams, just as flesh occupies the sixth place in biology [1], interpreted spiritually, corresponding in his rank with his ancestor, the Prophet of the right guidance, the sixth amongst the great teachers of humanity, the final amongst the great Prophets. 'Alī the Commander of the Faithful was like his second self (*al-khalqu'l-ākhar*), similar to the vegetating, moving, and making to move, animating and reasoning spirit. In a like way Ismā'īl b. Ja'far was the last of the "perfect" (*atimmā'*, i.e. the Imams of the first heptade), and his second self (*al-khalqu'l-ākhar*) was his son Muḥammad. He had already come into existence, and the signs of his mission were apparent,— he had the rank of the Qā'im, the Seventh of the great Teachers of humanity, the Spirit of Life.

When the time came to Ismā'īl to dissemble death, using this ruse against his enemies who were full of hatred, enmity,

[1] Every Imam and Prophet, in this mystic scheme, is symbolically compared with one of the phases in the evolution of the embryo (as mediaeval biology knew it), with a stage in the creation of the world, with one of the seven great Prophets (the Seventh still expected), and with his own predecessors, the Imams. None of these has any connection whatever with the importance or significance of such "parallels", or the nature of the activities of predecessors. The *sixth* Imam is thus associated with the *sixth* prophet, or the *sixth* phase in the development of the embryo, etc., only because these are the *sixth*, and not the seventh or fifth. There was obviously very little resemblance between the biography of Ismā'īl b. Ja'far and that of Muḥammad the Prophet, as between other parallels.

and the ardent desire to extinguish the Light of God,— although God will always preserve His Light as He intended it to be, if He wishes (allusion to Cor. IX, 32),— he, Ismā'īl, made a will addressed to his father, Ja'far aṣ-Ṣādiq, the Veracious, the Faithful, so that he should appoint "veils" (*ḥujūb*), and one who should be the guardian (*mustawda'*) for his son, Muḥammad. It was in conformity with what Hārūn instructed Moses to do, raising a trustee for his son. And Moses appointed Yūsha' b. an-Nūn to act as a "protective screen", or "veil" to him. And he (Ja'far aṣ-Ṣādiq) entrusted him, i.e. Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl, to Maymūn b. Ghaylān b. Bīdar b. Mihrān b. Salmān al-Fārsī [1]. The Imam educated him (Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl), and guarded him with the help of Maymūn al-Qaddāḥ, while he was still three years of age [2]. And Maymūn al-Qaddāḥ was the trustee (*mustawda'*) of the high position of his son [3]. He was from the

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[1] This is an obvious fake: no reliable historical information is available about his posterity. And it would be surprising if such an ardent devotee as Salmān were followed by a series of descendants bearing non-Muslim names. This seems to have been overdone by the authors of the "genealogy". In reality the obscure and mythical figure of Salmān (either a Persian Christian or a Jew) belongs entirely to the series of "the first men who" (cf. above, pp. 76 and 127). He is the mythical prototype of Persian Shi'ites (cf. "*Enc. of Islam*", IV, 116, article of G. Levi Della Vida; J. Horovitz, in "Der Islam", 1922, pp. 178–183; and L. Massignon, "Salmān Pāk et les Prémices Spirituelles de l'Islam Iranien", Tours, 1934, in the series of the Société des Études Iraniennes, No. 7).

[2] This is an esoteric revelation. As may be seen further on, cf. p. 236, the dreaded arch-enemy who so pursued the "infant" Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl, was the brother of his father, Mūsā b. Ja'far, who, most probably was much younger than himself, perhaps by as much as eight years.

[3] In connection with the expression *mustawda' amri-hi* it would do no harm to emphasise again what is mentioned above, on p. 154. *Mustawda'* by no means always implies the "temporary Imam", and is an ordinary participle, meaning "entrusted with". A complete parallel to this particular case is found in the end of the extract from this work, the *Zahru'l-ma'ānī*, given here, in the story of Jawdhar. He obviously could not be a temporary Imam while the real Imam, his master, was living. He was *mustawda'*, i.e. entrusted with *only* the knowledge of the secret bequest of the Imam concerning his successor. Most probably special secrecy was introduced in order to have a way out in case of the necessity to alter the nomination. He was acting as a kind of "notary public", guarding an important, but secret will of his master. *Mustawda' amri-hi* therefore obviously means nothing beyond the "trusted man who knew the real status of the Imam-designate", which was kept in secret under the circumstances, and which he had to reveal on a proper occasion to others. It is quite obvious that there could not be room for a temporary

descendants of Salmān, and the latter was a descendant of Isaac son of Jacob, who were all hereditary "trustees", those who were preaching and devotedly serving religion [1].

Ismā'īl was under the protection of his father, Imam Ja'far, just as Muḥammad, his grandfather, was under the protection of the Lord of [48] the time, Abū Ṭālib. Ismā'īl dissembled illness [2], and people began to visit him, from near and far. His father, however, watched the visitors, and noted their presence. When the death of Ismā'īl had taken place (in appearance), he was kept lying covered for three days, while Imam Ja'far noted the presence of those Hashimites and others who came to express their condolence. On the third day he gave orders to take the body to the grave, and, unveiling the face of the deceased, he asked those present whether they were sure that this was his late son Ismā'īl; they testified to this. And he again recorded those present. Then he buried Ismā'īl, and later wrote to Abū'd-Dawānīq (i.e. the Abbasid caliph al-Manṣūr, notorious for his parsimony, 136–158/754–775), informing him of what had taken place. His informers also submitted their reports to the same effect, gladdening him, relieving his anxiety as to what otherwise might worry and upset him . . .

After some time had passed, Ismā'īl appeared in Baṣra. People rushed to him, shouting that Ismā'īl b. Ja'far had risen

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Imam while Ja'far aṣ-Ṣādiq was still living. The story is an obvious fiction, and is built out of the ideas which became current much later on.

[1] Many indications found in sectarian literature suggest that probably about the middle or the end of the fourth/tenth c., for some strange reason, the myth of Salmān received great prominence: he is a Divine being in the *Ummu'l-kitāb*, in the texts of the Druzes, in the Nuṣayrī beliefs; he figures in many extremist prophetic *akhbār*, etc. It would be extremely interesting to trace his evolution in Sufic speculations, his part as a link in Sufic spiritual genealogies. Later on the myth continues to flourish for some time, but already in the tenth/sixteenth c. in Persia it is losing its great importance. The theory of the "hereditary trustees", *ḥujjats* in later Ismailism, in Persia and India, is a post-Fatimid development. There is apparently no trace of it in earlier works.

[2] What follows is obviously one of those fairy-tales typical of "secret" esoteric works, "reserved for the trusted and fully initiated few". This version apparently is the most elaborate on record, although by itself the story of the strange precautions of Imam Ja'far at the burial of his son Ismā'īl seems to be really old, and is often quoted.

from the dead. He passed an old man, a Shi'ite, who was a paralytic, in his shop, a "client" of his father. (On seeing him) the old man said:—"O, son of the daughter of the Apostle of God, take me by hand, so that God may take thy hand!"—"Ismā'īl" looked at him, tapped on his back with his blessed hand, and the old man's back became straight, cured of his illness. People saw this; and "Ismā'īl" disappeared [1].

When it was reported to Abū'd-Dawānīq, he remarked that in truth the descendants of Abū Kabsha [2] were great tricksters. He then summoned Imam Ja'far; and when the latter arrived, he started to reproach him; but aṣ-Ṣādiq produced a list of those who were present at the death, and many of whom were also present at the time. They testified the fact. This appeased the caliph's wrath, and Imam Ja'far was left in peace.

[49] What Ismā'īl had shown by his death, and later on by his reappearance after a time, was similar to what his grandfather, the Great Teacher and the Apostle of God, Muḥammad, had done when 'Alī produced (a document) to the adversary when the latter reproached him with (illegally) taking possession of a certain property . . . (follow other parallels from tradition and Biblical lore). Ismā'īl manifested his miracle to manifest the miracle of the Divine omnipotence to people, in his own case, and the fact that the "Word of God" (i.e. the Imamat) will always remain with his pure descendants from the house of the Prophet, until the Wisdom of God becomes complete, the mercy of God reaches mankind, His proofs become obvious, and His bounty triumphs.

Such are the great miracles which reason and logic are unable to comprehend; they are performed by the First Reason, which is the Primal Principle of Creation (*al-Ibdā'u'l-awwal*),

[1] This anecdote is obviously taken from the *Asrāru'n-nuṭaqā'* (cf. the Texts, p. 104), where it is narrated with more detail. It is by no means improbable that such an instance of a faith cure may really have happened, through an old devotee taking some one for the deceased on account of his great likeness.

[2] Obviously a contemptuous surname of 'Alī.

to reveal Divine omnipotence to the people, to those capable of knowing God, and to leave in confusion the enemies of the friends of God, those who oppose them and are hostile to them. Only those who know can understand these; and the promise of God does not concern the associates of the oppressors (cf. Cor., II, 118).

After this Imam Ja'far appointed his son Mūsā b. Ja'far as a "veil" for Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl, over (*'alā*) the one whom he appointed as a *bāb* (or chief *dā'ī*) to him, namely Maymūn, his "screen" and trustee [1]. Mūsā b. Ja'far taught *ta'wīl* and *ḥaqā'iq* [2]; he collected round him many Shi'ites who had missed the right road, and were following the mere name, instead of the real object, being content with words instead of meaning. Imam Ja'far concealed the residence of his grandson, Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl, appointing Maymūn al-Qaddāḥ, and his son 'Abdu'l-lāh as his guardians, in secrecy from every one except for a few trusted and knowing ones, to whom God had given special devotion to him. Maymūn and his son then began to search for *dār hijra* [3] for Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl, appointing devoted *dā'īs*, who could lead him [50] there, while the community was split in their allegiance. The righteous preached in favour of the real Imam, and those who were specially privileged, knew him personally. They were strictly ordered to keep what they knew a profound secret, and they did this, fearing their enemies.

A certain section believed in the revocability of the Imam's appointment. Others believed that the Imam was Mūsā b.

[1] Thus it appears that there were two "screens" for Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl: the chief *dā'ī* Maymūn, and his own uncle Mūsā, who was the *mustawda'* Imam, and, at the same time, his bitter enemy and rival.

[2] Mūsā b. Ja'far was eighteen at the time of his father's death, and could hardly have been an expert lecturer on theology. Apparently there are no proofs of his being such even at a ripe age; in the Ithna-'ashari tradition he figures very rarely as an author either for *akhbār* or for theosophic theories.

[3] In all available accounts of Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl's migrations there is no reference to either of these worthies. The *dār hijra* is the "country of refuge", according to the theory based on the example of the Prophet, who emigrated to Medina. The story probably is a concoction.

Ja'far, whom in reality his father appointed only as a "screen" for his, Ismā'īl's, son after the former's death. Another section thought that the Imam was 'Abdu'l-lāh b. Ja'far, surnamed al-Aflaḥ (al-Afṭaḥ). But he predeceased his father, and left no posterity,— thus their claims were futile. And another branch recognised Muḥammad b. Ja'far. Thus the community split after the disappearance of Ismā'īl b. Ja'far, and superstitious beliefs began to spread among them [1].

When the time came to Imam Ja'far to leave this world, and he died, he had previously, in order to placate Abū'd-Dawānīq, made a will addressed to his dignitaries, for the protection of his real successor, and of the community of his faithful followers . . . (Follows a parallel with 'Alī). . .

Mūsā b. Ja'far [2] occupied the place of his father, and the majority of the Shi'ite community recognised him; the ideas of the mob favoured him. Similarly, every one amongst the sons of Imam Ja'far claimed the Imamat for himself, while the real "man of God" was concealed in disguise from his enemies, and those who supported them. The sons of Imam Ja'far upheld the *sharī'at* and *ta'wīl*, with those true believers amongst their followers who recognised the rights of the real "Man of God ".

(As we have seen) the futility of the claims of 'Abdu'l-lāh b. Ja'far became clear with the extinction of his posterity. Muḥammad b. Ja'far [**51**] drew his sword in the sanctuary of Mekka, interrupting the ceremony of the *ḥajj*, which God has prescribed; and he was overcome by his enemy. A rope was hung on his neck, and he was taken through many towns, shown on the *minbars* of mosques, repudiating his claims, acknowledging his error, openly and publicly [3]. But the real Imam never

[1] This is another borrowing from the *Asrāru'n-nuṭaqā'*, much condensed.

[2] Here he is called Mūsā b. Ja'far *ar-Riḍā*. The surname ar-Riḍā, as is known, really belongs to his son, 'Alī. He himself was surnamed al-Kāẓim. This is obviously a *lapsus calami*.

[3] This is both found in the *Asrāru'n-nuṭaqā'*, and in the *Sharḥu'l-akhbār*.

repudiates the "word of God" and His mystery, even at the threat of death, as did Ḥusayn b. 'Alī; otherwise he conceals himself, as did the pure ones from the posterity of 'Alī.

As regards Mūsā, his father, Imam Ja'far, appointed him only as a "screen" for the real successor, so that the latter's position might be concealed from his enemies, and in order that they should not know his privileged position. But Mūsā began to claim to be a real Imam, himself and his descendants. They said that the Prophet had given the indication that the Mahdī was to be the 12-th after 'Alī. Therefore they made Ja'far the sixth, and Mūsā the first in the second half-dozen, inventing impious beliefs and fantastic stories. They declared as untrue the words of the Prophet about the "sun rising from the West", or that "the banner of the Mahdī, when he rises under it, will never be turned". But God Himself explained what He meant in the case of the Lord of the Command, and the real Successor, who performed real miracles, and explained the signs of God, al-Mahdī bi'l-lāh, who rose in the West. He rose as the Prophet had risen, slaughtering those who opposed him by military force. Thus the rubbish was thrown away, and the earth was lit with the Light of its Lord, in full splendour and glory. All that was invented by Mūsā, and what he falsely claimed, became futile, and the Light of God appeared in the Imams who descended from Ismā'īl b. Ja'far.

Once Imam al-Mu'izz was asked about *waḥy*, the Divine inspiration. He replied:—"It means Divine [52] indication, which shines forth by Divine Light". Ja'far b. Manṣūri'l-Yaman said:—"The Imamat neither changes, nor can be transferred (to another line), continuing in the course of long periods of time. Individual Imams change and go to the other world and the place of bliss, by the disappearance of their mortal self. But their progeny remains in their stead, and the Imamat continues, because the Imamat is transferred, but cannot be discontinued. The Imams succeed by transfer and connection of the successors from the ancestors, just as the Throne of God

changes, but is imperishable" (follows a Biblical parallel of Noah and his sons)...

When the progeny of 'Alī was discontinued in the line of Mūsā and his descendants, it was proved that they never possessed the robe of honour of this priceless rank, because the Prophet said:—"I leave with you the Book of God and my progeny, the descendants of my house, so that you may hold fast, in order never to err after my death. They shall never separate until both return to the "pool" (*ḥawḍ*) "[1]. And the "pool" here means the Qā'im, whose chain of the Imamat can never be interrupted. And it is mentioned that 'Alī, the Commander of the Faithful, will give to his followers from the community of the Prophet of God to drink water from this "pool" on the day of Resurrection. It is he who will give to every one of his supporters his share of the true knowledge, and repay his debts. He is the real "pool" of prophetship, of Apostleship, trusteeship and Imamat. He is the rallying centre of the pious to whom God has given His miracles. He is the possessor of the real Truth and the excellent knowledge which will spread on his return to the people of the time, after having been hidden in appearance. Such are the signs and proofs of his book (*sifr*) concerning the successors who will succeed each other by the manifestation of miracles and the revelation of mystical knowledge, by the guidance of their followers towards the light from the darkness, [53] and their salvation from being drowned in the flood of error and doubt. Whoever wishes may believe, and whoever prefers it may disbelieve.

Thus the Imamat of Ismā'īl b. Ja'far has been proved; and the "Word of God" has remained in his successors, in every Imam in his posterity, whether manifest or hidden. And all that the mischiefmakers claimed has been in vain, and the unfortunate deceivers have failed. God wishes to make His

[1] Obviously an allusion to *Kawthar*, a pool in Paradise, which is connected with 'Alī.

Light complete, even if this displeases the unbelievers (cf. Coran, IX, 32).

When Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl grew up, and suspicions about him amongst the oppressors had been distracted by the measures taken by his grandfather (Imam Ja'far), he became the Imam.

7. (Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl).

Then rose to the Imamat Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl, the Seventh amongst the Imams, and their Qā'im, corresponding to his forefather 'Alī, the Commander of the Faithful, completing this spiritual cycle, the final creation, which is the soul of things, their spirit, and their meaning. He brought to the completion the first spiritual cycle (*dawr*), and after him begins the second cycle.

He was in Medina when he rose to the protection of the religion of God, despatched his *dā'īs*, spread his doctrine, and ordered his missionaries to search for the "land of refuge" (*dār hijra*) in which to seek safety. He flourished during the reign of ar-Rashīd (the Abbasid caliph, 170–193/786–809) [1]. When the latter heard about Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl, whose propaganda had spread by that time, he gave orders to arrest him, and bring him to the court. The Imam meanwhile had built in his house an underground passage in which he used to conceal himself from his enemies [2]. So, when a messenger arrived from ar-Rashīd with his demands, the Imam entered his subterranean refuge, and remained there. The agents of the caliph searched for him, but could not find him. They returned to ar-Rashīd, and submitted a report on their actions.

[1] This is extremely doubtful. Information which seems to be more reliable, from the earliest sources, indicates that he was born most probably soon after 120/738. Thus by the date of the succession of Hārūn he must have been in his sixth decade. Most probably this is based on the legends in the style of the Arabian Nights, related by Sayyid-nā Idrīs in his '*Uyūnu'l-akhbār* (cf. my "Ismailis and Qarmatians", JBBRAS, 1940, pp. 60-61).

[2] It is indeed remarkable, how invariably all sorts of "underground passages", refuges, etc., figure in stories of Ismaili eminent men: in the *Sīra* it is a hidden treasury, in the stories of 'Abdān, of Zakrūya b. Mahdūya, etc., it is a refuge, and so forth.

When the excitement had subsided, the Imam started on his journey in search of the "land of refuge", leaving behind in Medina [54] his two sons who were not expected to succeed him as the Imams, Ismā'īl and Ja'far [1]. He himself went to Nīshāpūr [2], in disguise, concealing himself from his enemies. He then continued to move about between these two places (?) [3] and Daylam. He married in Nīshāpūr a woman, by whom he had a son, called 'Abdu'l-lāh, surnamed ar-Raḍī. This Imam 'Abdu'l-lāh was generally known as 'Aṭṭār (druggist), which surname he assumed as a protection for his real position, and as a precaution [4]. He appointed for him (i.e. his son and heir) several *ḥijābs*, or "veils", ordering them all, and the *ḥujjats*,[5] to bear one and the

[1] This is apparently the only place in which these two sons of the Imam are mentioned in Ismaili works. Ithna-'ashari works on genealogy, as the '*Umdatu't-Ṭālib*, mention their numerous posterity.

[2] Cf. "Ismailis and Qarmatians", JBBRAS, 1940, pp. 61–67. It is indeed instructive to note that Sayyid-nā Idrīs in his '*Uyūnu'l-akhbār* narrates that Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl went to Nihāwand (which seems more likely), but in his *Zahru'l-ma'ānī*, tells the "fully initiated and trusted few" that he, the Imām, went to Nīshāpūr. We can only infer that for him, a Yamanite Arab, with no connection with Persia, over two thousand miles away, both places were the same, or equally "abstract". We have no facts or documents to prove or reject his story; but there is much improbability in the Nīshāpūr version of the Imam's route: towards the end of the second/eighth c. it was the seat of the governors of Khorasan (later on of the Tahirids), who supported orthodox theologians. It was an important centre on the direct road between Baghdad and the Eastern Provinces, a small place (before it had grown immensely under the Saljuqs), in which it would hardly have been easy to live in disguise.

[3] Most probably a mistake, *bayna-humā* for *bayna hā*.

[4] This is obviously Sayyid-nā's fantasy, based on vague recollections regarding the famous Persian Sufic poet, Farīdu'd-dīn 'Attār of Nīshāpūr, whose mausoleum still forms a conspicuous landmark in the environs. He died some time between 618 and 627/1221–1230, and although his name,— Abū Hāmid Muhammad b. Abī Bakr Ibrāhīm,— hardly suggests that he was a Shi'ite, nevertheless there is a strong tradition amongst the Persian Ismailis that he was an Ismaili, and some of his works,— unless they are wrongly attributed to him,— bear clear traces of some Ismaili connections. It is interesting that nothing like this is mentioned in the '*Uyūnu'l-akhbār*. There are indications in the latter work to the effect that Sayyid-nā Idrīs came across a Nizārī Ismaili, supposed to be from Samarqand, apparently an ignorant man. Perhaps all these statements are based on information derived from him.

[5] All this sounds very inconvincing: apparently this is a retrospective application of methods introduced at a much later stage. The Ismaili propaganda organisation probably became developed only about a century later.

same name as that of the (future) Imam. So that those of them who were accepting the oath of allegiance on behalf of the Imam from the neophytes would name as such one of the "veils", and suspicions, if roused, should be distracted upon him, from the real Master of the Religion. This practice became established with all three "Concealed Imams". This is why the *dā'īs* in different localities give different names to these three Imams, so that each version is quite different from the other [1].

Thus Imam Muḥammad started his propaganda, and the sword (of his enemies) did not reach him until the predestined hour of his death had struck. He spread religious knowledge, explained esoteric doctrines, and revealed to the chosen ones the "great mystery". Many revelations of esoteric ideas, miracles, Divine signs, proofs of his high mission, and signs of his position were revealed by him,— so much of these as never was revealed by any Imam before him. And there never was (or will be) any other Imam like himself, because he was the Seventh Imam, who possessed the authority, was not concealed, had the Divine Glory and Light, and was the Interpreter of the Hidden Knowledge [2]. He was the crown of the cycle to which he belonged.

[1] This is a very interesting allusion to the fact that even as late as in the ninth/fifteenth c. there was a difference between different branches of the Ismailis in respect of the names of the three "concealed Imams". The explanation of the fact does not sound very convincing, of course. Much more probable would be the suggestion that this difference was due to the continuance of the original tradition in the different Shi'ite sects which in the course of time became amalgamated with Ismailism, by acceptance of their Imams. We can easily believe that for the fanatical and conservative mentality of the devotees it would be easier to "graft" al-Mahdī and his descendants, the Fatimid caliphs, on the line which they were accustomed to regard as the true Imams, rather than to accept the correct Fatimid genealogy by proclaiming their own earlier version incorrect, and the Imams previously recognised as untrue. It is highly probable that as soon as the news of al-Mahdī's triumph had spread, many sectarian Shi'ite communities joined Ismailism, seing its truth so tangibly proved. Some, perhaps, became amalgamated in a body. Therefore it is quite likely that the extraordinary variety of al-Mahdī's genealogies is by no means entirely due to the inventions and theories of historians or heresiologists. Many, especially, most probably, those connecting the Fatimids with the Ithna-'ashari Imams, must be the creation of popular sectarian religious conservatism.

[2] Compare this account of his activities, and the story found in the *Uyūnu'l-akhbār* ("Ismailis and Qarmatians", 61–67). There is not the

He was the Utmost Limit of the final laws of the final *sharī'at* (*ghāyatu'sh-sharā'i'i'l-makhtūma*),[1] arranged according to the rank of the believers (*ḥudūd*), whose minds could comprehend each stage [2].

He is the Fully Authoritative (potential) Qā'im (*al-Qā'im bi'l-quwwa*), the Lord of the Primary Period of Revelation, because the Real "practicing" Qā'im (*bi'l-fi'l*) is the Universal One, the Lord of the last period of revelation, and of the "last Commotion", the Qā'im [55] of the Great Qiyāmat.

Qiyāmats (= revolutions, uprisings) are numerous (in the spiritual life of the individual). The first of these is the rank of the "restrained" *ma'dhūn* (*al-ma'dhūnu'l-makfūf*), then the "authorised" *ma'dhūn* (*muṭlaq*), then the "trusted" *dā'ī*, then the "authorised" *dā'ī*, then the "preaching" (?) *dā'ī*, then the *ḥujjat*, and their crown,— the *bāb* [3]. All such spiritual ranks are (spiritual) risings, in which each stands by what is given to him to know of the special ideas, intended to distinguish between the material things which are within his vision. And all these "uprisings" are ultimately crowned with the Qā'im of the Great Revolution (*qiyāmat*), and this position in the individual spiritual world is symbolised by the Imam, who is the Qā'im of the Qiyāmat, and the Ultimate Goal of all goals. Each spiritual rank, which we have named above, symbolises the Qā'im with regard to that which is just below him, until all these ultimately are under the Qā'im of the Great Uprising, the Lord of the Great Commotion, under whom are all positions.

slightest doubt that all this is fiction, based solely on the fact of Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl's being the *Seventh* Imam, and, therefore, the Seventh Nāṭiq, who *had* to reveal a new religion, even if he really never did this.

[1] Obviously the hypothetical "final" *sharī'at* which the Seventh *Nāṭiq* was expected to reveal. Further on the author tries to find a way out from an obviously impossible and undesirable situation.

[2] This is one of the instances of the concessions made by Sayyid-nā Idrīs to non-Ismaili ideas about the Ismaili doctrine, namely a vague admission of the "degrees of initiation".

[3] All this, of course, is the theorising of Sayyid-nā Idrīs himself, and probably has nothing to do with Muhammad b. Ismā'īl's own teachings, which remain unknown, as no written testimony is preserved.

He is the Ultimate Sacred Goal for them, comprising all, from the first three thousand years which were the end of the cycle of *kashf* (i.e. full revelation), to the period of Muḥammad the Prophet.

It was to him (Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl) that the Commander of the Faithful 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib alluded in his expression: "after (?) (or — in ?) ten thousand years a person shall rise as a symbol of this great position, uniting in himself all the highest spiritual ranks (*maqāmāt*) of all periods, in the scope of His organising wisdom. He shall be the one who will leave behind him the Tenth Reason [1] after his death, and this will rise as the factor bringing the universe into order, within his own sphere of activities." He (i.e. Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl) was named the Seventh Nāṭiq (i.e. great teacher of humanity), because he rose to preach by the Command of God, incorporating in himself all the virtues which are to be crowned in him. He is neither the Revealer of the final religion (*mutimm*), nor the Apostle of God (*rasūl*) [2], but he is in a class by himself, of a unique rank. This work has already been completed, and order introduced.

Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl has been chosen for this task of the organisation of the (Ismaili propaganda) ranks during [56] the (impending) period of occultation (*satr*), because if thou takest

[1] *Yakhlufu* or *yukhallifu* ? The tenth emanation of the Absolute, *al-'Aqlu'l-fa'āl*, is associated with the lowest celestial sphere and the moon, which may be described as the complex of the intelligible laws of nature immediately governing life on the earth. What apparently the sentence implies is the ideal state of complete harmony, which will be attained as the result of the activities of the chain of the Imams, crowned by the Qā'im, when humanity, and the world, will live as a smoothly running ideal mechanism.

[2] Obviously a concession to the all-Islamic dogma of the Prophet Muḥammad being the last and final one. If the latter is also a *Nāṭiq*, in fact the Sixth *Nāṭiq*, then the Seventh also should be a *Rasūl* or Apostle. And just a few lines above it was solemnly stated that he was the revealer of *ash-sharī'atu'l-makhtūma*. Sayyid-nā Idrīs obviously tries here, as on many other occasions, to avoid falling between two stools, without any convincing result. This is one of the examples of that mystic vision, in which two contradictory statements are both admitted as true at one and the same time. In such cases the student is required to possess strong confidence in the honesty of the author to treat his statements seriously, and not simply to take it for ordinary foolishness.

the number of Ādam, his *Waṣī*, and the Imams of his period, the last of them will be a *Nāṭiq*, i.e. Noah (and so on, other Biblical parallels, ending with) Jesus, his *Waṣī*, and Imams of his period; the last was Muḥammad the Prophet, who has inherited from them their high offices. And he is a *Nāṭiq*, and the Final *Nāṭiq*.

His *Waṣī* had a singular position, and if thou takest the number of the Imams of his *dawr*, thou wilt see that Muḥammad b. Isma'īl is the *Seventh*. And the Seventh (Imam) possesses potential (rights to be a *Nāṭiq*), *quwwat*, above his predecessors. For this reason he has become a *Nāṭiq*, the final member of the heptade, and the Qā'im. He cancels the *sharī'at* of the Lord of the Sixth Cycle by explaining its hidden meaning, and revealing its purposes [1].

This was mentioned by Imam al-Mu'izz li-dīni'l-lāh in connection with the prayers prescribed for Saturday [2]: "Blessings be upon the true *Qā'im*, the real *Nāṭiq*, the ninth from his fore-father, the Apostle of God, the eighth from his progenitor, the *Kawthar* (i.e. 'Alī), the seventh in the line of his ancestors the (pure) Imams, the Seventh amongst the Apostles of God, beginning with Ādam, the Seventh *Waṣī*, beginning with Seth, and the Seventh Imam of the Prophet's house". He continues in this strain, and then he,— may his blessings be upon us! — (*'alay-nā salāmu-hu*) adds: "the One by Whom the Universe has been ennobled, glorified, blessed, and crowned with the crown of creation, the One by Whose service (*qiyām*) the law of Muḥammad the Prophet has been purified (*'aṭilat*) [3], and with whose help the earth shall be filled with justice and equity even as it has been

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[1] If Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl was the one who superseded or altered (*nāsikh*) the *sharī'at* of the sixth *dawr*, by "explaining its hidden meaning", — then logically we can expect that all the Imams, before and after him, were also *seventh nāṭiqs*, because such was also their mission. Such a helpless struggle to reconcile superstitious beliefs with a philosophical theory is typical of Ismaili esoterism, one of its "great mysteries".

[2] Cf. "Ismailis and Qarmatians", p. 80.

[3] The original meaning of *'aṭilat* is "to be divested of ornaments, bare". This obviously implies making it divested of superfluous elements, obscuring its original substance, as explained further on. Perhaps the reading *'uṭṭilat* would be better ?

filled with injustice and oppression. And the One about whom the Prophet of God said: the Mahdī will be from amongst our descendants, of my family, a man with big hooked nose, and black eyes. He will fill the earth (etc.). He will be the translator and interpreter of the Coran, explaining its message, and making it clear; he will be the Qā'im of the Day of the *Qiyāmat*, of the separation (of souls from bodies), of the quickening of the bones, and resurrection (*taghābun*)" [1]. These are the words of al-Mu'izz, explaining the position of Muḥammad [57] b. Ismā'īl, describing his exceptional and exalted position, because he was the Seventh of the first heptade of the Imams (*atimmā'*), explaining his real position. The Seventh Imam possesses authority (or potentialities, *quwwa*) which his predecessors do not possess. For this reason (he), being the Seventh *Nāṭiq*, was potentially the Qā'im. And the same potentialities which belonged to him, also belonged to the Seventh of the second heptade (*khulafā'*), i.e. to al-Mu'izz *li-dīni'l-lah*, the seventh of two heptades, and the fourth in the (first) four (of the Fatimid caliphs). And a similar position belonged to Imam aṭ-Ṭayyib, as whatever has happened shall be repeated again, and what has become known, shall become known again,— there is nothing new under the sun. Heptades of the Imams will continue to come into existence, and the seventh of these will always be the most powerful (*aqwā*), the wisest, the most learned, and eloquent (and so forth), of them, until all this ends in the final *Qiyām*, or (final) revelation, manifestation of the Divine power, and broadcasting of the hidden knowledge. The Revelation (*kashf*) is the unveiling of the original (eternal) ideas from all that obscures them, and their communication to those who deserve to know them. Whoever has reached such a degree of perfection, he is in the possession of the "cycle of revelation" (*dawru'l-kashf*); by this fact he has already recognised

[1] *Yawmu't-taghābun*, i.e. the day of resurrection (lit. of swindling) is so named because the believers shall as if were swindling the unbelievers, by occupying the place in Paradise which they expected to have for themselves.

the Qā'im, and the latter will reveal to him the virtue (of piety) and the punishment (for impiety). He will then have reached what was promised to him, having seen the Master of his *dawr* by his mental vision, not by the physical eye-sight,— and by clear revelation (*kashf*), in which there is nothing reserved (*satr*).

Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl did not abolish anything of the formal worship and law (*ẓāhir*) of the *sharī'at* of Muḥammad the Prophet; on the contrary, he strengthened it, and ordered every one to act according to it. Such was the practice of (all) the pure Imams, his descendants and successors, who uphold it, who stand fast by the obligatory prescriptions, and carefully observe what has been ordered, without the slightest neglect, overlooking, or simplification of these. What Imam al-Mu'izz meant by the expression "the *sharī'at* of Muḥammad was purified (*'uṭṭilat*) by his mission", refers to his explaining its meaning, and revealing and clarifying its hidden points (*asrār*). By this he expelled for his followers and supporters different elementary (*ẓāhir*) beliefs which contained traces either of *ta'ṭīl* (divesting the Deity of Its attributes), or *tashbīh* (anthropomorphism), concerning the True Creator, or making the idea of angels similar to that of human beings, and attributing bodies to them, although they are spiritual conceptions; and (generally) this kind of (perverse) beliefs in things which exist in this [58] world. He, Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl, purified such beliefs, explaining their real purpose, by revealing their mystical values, and making manifest correct explanation, based on the allegorical interpretation (*ta'wīl*), through which true belief in the unity of God can be attained. He, God, is free from the properties belonging to His creations; and angels are known as abstract conceptions, or as a difference between the reward for good and punishment for bad, not as what they are believed to be by those who profess that they are material beings.

This is similar to the acts of the Commander of the Faithful 'Alī who was the first who rose (*Qā'im*) to reveal the inner meaning of religion, explaining its precious and sacred hidden

sense. The same was also done by the earlier Imams, as it was their mission to do this, and their eternal purpose in guarding these principles. They rose with full authority to (help) the erring mortals from whom the real meaning (of religion) is hidden and concealed. And they actually helped those who are capable to understand the real truth, revealing to them thoroughly what they tried to acquire in religious knowledge. Verily, brother, they did not possess the necessary wisdom before this. Learn about the virtues of the Men of God, the Imams, and receive what they give thee, being grateful for this, seizing fast the "anchor of salvation" (*'urwatu'l-wuthqā*), or the saving rope (*ḥablu'l-matīn*)!

8. ('Abdu'l-lāh b. Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl, ar-Raḍī).

When Imam Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl was about to die, he handed over the earth to his son, 'Abdu'l-lāh ar-Raḍī, making him his successor and trustee. He was the first of the three "concealed" Imams, by the order of God and His inspiration [1]. He received his office from his father, and succeeded him in his high position. He corresponds to the seed (*salāla*) in the embryonal evolution of the human body, and to Ādam in the first *dawr* of Prophets. He is the first [59] of the second heptade of the Imams (*khulafā'*), and corresponds with al-Ḥasan b. 'Alī, the first of the *atimmā'* (i.e. the Imams of the first heptade).

He concealed himself, his *ḥijābs*, and other dignitaries. His *ḥujjat* and *ḥijāb* was 'Abdu'l-lāh b. Maymūn [2]. The Imam did not show any trace of his existence to any one, or given any in-

[1] This is the usual formula which is repeated further on in connection with every subsequent Imam, obviously taken from the *Asrāru'n-Nuṭaqā'*.

[2] If Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl really flourished under Hārūn ar-Rashīd (170–193/786–809), and if, as appears from the story, 'Abdu'l-lāh was born in his reign, there is little reason to doubt that 'Abdu'l-lāh b. Maymūn, who flourished at the time of Imam Ja'far, must have been already long dead. And it is significant that he is never mentioned again, neither in this story, nor elsewhere. Nor is there any trace of him in such works as the *Istitār*, *Sīrat* of Ja'far, etc. This matter has already been discussed above, cf. p. 128 sq.

dication of himself, so that nobody knew his hiding place except for the "bearers of the Throne of God", who stand by the Divine order, the guardians of His creation, and the perfect amongst his, the Imam's *ḥujjats*, appointed for propaganda. His occultation was like the darkest night, and this happened because the forces of evil received ascendancy over the Truth, as the tyrannical Abbasid government was then strong, and fears and dangers were great. On account of the strictness of his concealment, when his dignitaries were accepting on his behalf the oath of allegiance from neophytes, they used to tell them that they should obey the Lord of the time (*waliyyu'l-'aṣr*), without pronouncing the name of the Imam. Only when the neophyte had advanced in religious learning, and received promotion to a higher position, they would write for him the name of the *ḥijābs*, never revealing, however, the name of the Imam, or alluding to it by a sign or expression, until he had achieved the position of a trusted and independent worker (*iṭlāq*). Only then would he be found deserving of the knowledge of the Imam's name, by his request and his merit. This practice was in use through the whole period of the occultation of the Imams, until the Sun of Truth rose from the West, lighting up the horizon of religion for every one who seized fast the "anchor of salvation". (Follow lines and lines of hollow lyrical eloquence in the same strain). . .

Dā'ī Muḥammad b. Zayd, in his book *al-Balāgh* (end of the fourth/tenth c., cf. *Guide*, No. 109) quotes a story about Imam Ja'far, who said to his intimate associates:—"Strive to reach the sky gradually (by a ladder), and you will find what you want". On being asked what was such a ladder, he explained that it was progress in learning, by which one advances higher and higher in it, and approaches it by his increasing knowledge and understanding . . . (follow discussions of the *ḥudūd*, found in every book on *ḥaqā'iq*, etc., having no connection with the subject) . . .

[60] When his term of life ended, and propaganda in his favour came to an end, he appointed his son Aḥmad at-Taqī.

and ascended to the holy abodes which rise in the sphere of angels.

9. (Aḥmad b. 'Abdi'l-lāh b. Muḥammad, at-Taqī).

Thus rose, by the order of God and His inspiration, Imam Aḥmad b. 'Abdi'l-lāh at-Taqī, the second amongst the *khulafā'* (i.e. the Imams of the second heptade). His *ḥujjat* was 'Abdu'l-lāh b. Maymūn. This Imam corresponded in biology to the embryo stage, and in history to Noah, the second *Nāṭiq*, and to his ancestor, Imam al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī, the second amongst the Imams of the first heptade (*atimmā'*). He taught humanity as to the plain and esoteric subjects, and compiled *The Treatises* (i.e. the Encyclopaedia of the *Ikhwānu's-ṣafā*), according to the four principal classes of human knowledge (follow the well known details of this work, but nothing is said about the circumstances of its compilation)...

The fundamental principles and institutions of the *sharī'at* have been strengthened and reinforced by parallels from the physical and psychical world. Arabs and non-Arabs have been enlightened by this work, so that the community hurried to those dignitaries of the Imam who were preaching the sciences treated in it, while the True Lord remained in concealment. This he did because al-Ma'mūn (the seventh Abbasid caliph, 198–218/813–833) collected astrologers, lavishing upon them a great wealth, and ordering them to compile a *zīj*, i.e. astronomical tables, which should be associated with his name [1], while those who ought really to have possessed supreme authority (*wulātu'l-amr*, i.e. the Imams) were living in disguise and concealment. The caliph was sure that the (leading) descendants of Fāṭima

[1] It is true that al-Ma'mūn was much interested in astrology and astronomy, and even built an observatory in Baghdad. But it is difficult to see which *Zīj* is here referred to: perhaps the tables compiled by Aḥmad b. 'Abdi'l-lāh al-Ḥāsib al-Marwazī (cf. Brockelmann G. d. A. L., I, 221). Accusations of impiety and the propaganda of heretical doctrines against al-Ma'mūn do not belong to Ismaili circles only: they are chiefly based on reminiscences of his Mu'tazilite leanings, and his encouragement of the doctrines such as of the Coran being created, and others.

had all perished, and that no one remained to uphold the principles of law, or to explain its application. He wished to uproot the *sharī'at* of Muḥammad the Prophet, and replace it with (law based on) astrology. While (as he thought) astrology teaches about the beginning and end of the world, is based on mathematics, and the reaction to good and evil (*'iqāb wa thawāb*), the religion of the Prophet, as every one may see, has no foundation. Thus, if this is true, those who treated 'Alī as they did, were [61] not free in their actions. And if they cannot bear responsibility for what they have done, it would be obviously wrong to blame others for such things as slaying descendants of the Prophet, as all the blood of Qurayshites was shed by predestination [1].

It was when the Possessor of the Right (i.e. Imam Aḥmad) was informed about this theory that he compiled his Encyclopaedia, revealing in it four philosophical disciplines, which his enemies could not do. With the help of this the pillars of the *sharī'at* have been strengthened, and its laws have become enforced by the support of parallels, and allusions to the real meaning, which neither could be neglected, nor regarded as impossible.

When the work was completed, and was published by the dignitaries (= *dā'īs*), it met with universal approval and fame. The caliph saw what he could obtain of this book, and was completely overwhelmed and perturbed. He handed it to his astrologers who found it beyond their powers, revealing to them things which they did not know. It introduced to them Almagest [2], in which it even made some improvement, while they did not properly know anything of it. At this stage al-Ma'mūn

[1] This is an echo of the disputes between the different Islamic schools in the time of al-Ma'mūn concerning the freedom of will and predestination.

[2] The great work of Ptolemy on astronomy, in an Arabic translation. It would indeed be interesting to verify how far this claim to have introduced it to Islamic students really is justified. The first translation, from Syriac, apparently belongs to al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf b. Maṭar al-Ḥāsib, who completed it in 214/829. Cf. Brock. I, 203.

received information that the Owner of the rightful Authority (i.e. the Imam) was living, as the earth can never remain without the Proof (of God), i.e. the Imam. Therefore he altered his original intentions, by which he had expected to have something to boast of before the Imam and the Alids, and summoned *qāḍīs* and *faqīhs* from different towns. He also handed over to the descendants of Fatima the oasis of Fadak and the "heights" (? — *al-'Awālī*,— apparently the name of an adjacent locality). He argued with the *faqīhs* on the matter, and disagreed with them. Then he gave orders to proclaim in all towns that he summoned all the people who were descended from Fatima. Some answered the summons, relying on his exhibition of justice in the case of Fadak and al-'Awālī. He made judicial inquiry into the claims submitted to him in connection with this property, and declared it as proved that Fadak and al-'Awālī were a gift, granted by the Prophet to Fāṭima[1] . . . Some Fatimids answered his summons, and amongst them 'Alī b. Mūsā ar-Riḍā, the (second) of the (second) six of the Twelvers' Imams. [Follows the well known story that, being disappointed by the philosophical equipment of ar-Riḍā, al-Ma'mūn, nevertheless, declared his intentions to abdicate in his favour, etc. Then comes a learned Ismaili *dā'ī*, who impresses him; for the purpose of shielding the Imam he confesses that he is the Imam himself, and is executed by the caliph. As 'Alī ar-Riḍā was dead by 203/818, all this is nothing but a tissue of anachronisms: Imam Aḥmad most probably had not yet been born, and the Encyclopaedia of the *Ikhwānu'ṣ-ṣafā* did not exist. But it is all extremely typical of those "highly secret truths, reserved for the few highly initiated and trusted", which are what esoteric works usually contain when they touch on historical matters].

. . . This miracle (of Imam Aḥmad) was similar to the miracle of the second *Nāṭiq* (i.e. Noah), which he performed (by building the Ark), when in his time the Deluge happened in

[1] Concerning the story of Fadak cf. W. Ivanow, *Kalami Pir*, Bombay, 1935, pp. 35-36.

order to destroy the enemies of God, and take them to the abode of humiliation. Miracles of the men [62] of God are great things, the holiest and the most blessed Divine signs, because the Light of Saints comes from the First Light, from which all other lights are derived; the ways of reason are barred from its comprehension. The ultimate limit which the wise in their effort to know it would strive to attain, lies beyond their knowledge of the veil, which, in fact, is the nearest to them, and which is the highest limit of their penetration. This (in the sphere of Ismaili organisation) is the chief *dā'ī*, the *bāb*, whom those *dā'īs* who are under him can know. And this is a different thing from the rank of the Highest Proof, who is the top of the spiritual ladder, and its final goal. Such is the highest universal evolutionary (or: Salsal-like) rank.

Similarly Jābir b. Zayd al-Ju'fī [1] relates from Imam al--Bāqir:—"I went to Our Lord, and, on entering, saw in his hand a rosary made of (dried) olives, while he himself was saying: "Glory be to God, for everything from whence I have taken the "veil", a "door" was opened to me. And over everything at the door of which I was knocking, a "veil" appeared. Glory be to the One who helps and guides those who search after Him, and directs those who speed in the search for His light". Said I to myself: "Verily, thou art the Great One". And the Imam lifted his face towards me, and said: "Verily, great is the One Who has been appointed by the Great One, and all-knowing is the One who has been appointed by the All-knowing, by His blessing emanating from Him to me. I am a slave of God, and it was Divinely revealed to me to bid you not to worship any deity except for God the Great". I said to myself: "This is a *veil*,—why does he conceal himself?" The Imam turned his face to

[1] Jābir b. Zayd al-Ju'fī is one of the favourite *rāwīs* of various mystic and esoteric speculations of Shi'ite extremists, associated with Imam Muhammad al-Bāqir. It is difficult to ascertain his real history. He apparently flourished in the beginning of the second/eighth c. Cf. a similar transfiguration vision narrated in the *Ummu'l-kitāb* and the *Ghāyatu'l-mawālīd*, and note 1 on p. 117 above.

me, and I saw bright light shining and radiating from it,— so much that my eyes could not stand it, and I began to faint. And the Imam uttered:—"This is one of the miracles that some Saints can work". After this he said: "Should I show thee more, Jābir?" And I replied: "No, this is enough for me". And he said: "I will announce to thee, Jābir, the glad tidings: God has purified thee so that His shadow might descend upon thee, by the manifestation of His holy "gate" to thee, the holy Salsal [1]. O, Jābir, Salmān is one of us, a member of the family of the Prophet [2]. His *ẓāhir*, i.e. as he appears to the eye of an ordinary mortal, is as the outside of a door (which is shut); but his nature (*bāṭin*) is derived from the light of the expression "*ar-Raḥmān* [63] *ar-Raḥīm*" (i.e. from the formula of the *basmala* in the Coran). When thy vision [3] is screened from thy (lower) self, thy (better) self shall become visible in the shining of his light. Thou hast seen as much as thou couldst stand, and every one shall witness as much as it has been revealed to thee. They also shall say and preach what was said and preached through thee. And we shall be behind all this, all shall be visible to us. If thou couldst bear from Him as much as thou bearest from us, we shall become for thee what we are from Him (i.e. if thou couldst realise as much the Glory of God as thou recognisest our Imamat, thou shalt realise our real mystic nature?). Then hasten to discover the true relation between us and thyself. Then what thou canst not comprehend shall dawn upon thee, if God please".

This is what Imam al-Bāqir has revealed about the great holiness of the "Greatest Veil" which is the highest, the holiest,

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[1] *Salsal* is the mystic name of Salmān al-Fārsī. Cf. L. Massignon "Salmān Pāk" (Tours, 1934), p. 35. This name is also used in the *Ummu'l-kitāb*. This particular passage is interesting as leaving no doubts as to the identity of these two names: Salmān = Salsal.

[2] Cf. Massignon, *op. cit.*, 16-17. This is apparently a very early Shi'ite *ḥadīth*.

[3] Here *al-abṣār*. The idea is somewhat Sufic. It is difficult to see whether such speculations really belong to the fourth/tenth c., to which many, if not all esoteric revelations of Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir belong, or to a much later time.

and the nearest to God of all "veils". And if such is the "veil", what then should be the thing "veiled", if eyes are unable to behold it, and mental vision fails to understand it? This is why it is commanded:—"When Light dawns, prostrate before Him" [1]. If so, and the Imams are such, then it is no wonder that wisdom which is spread by them can enlighten even the wisest, and reason trembles, being unable to follow them with knowledge based on causation.

Thus the (chief) miracle of the second Imam of the second heptade was great, and the road to its appreciation straight. And he was the Glorious, Aḥmad, glorified by what the Great One (*'Aẓīm*) has given him, by how He kept him concealed and hidden; from his Light other lights were lit, and by his wisdom became known God, the Perfect, Faithgiving, Helper, Great, the Ruler.

When his death approached, and he was about to depart from this world, he handed over his authority to his son al-Ḥusayn b. Aḥmad, making him the abode of his light, holy and great.

10. (Ḥusayn b. Aḥmad al-Muqtadā al-Hādī).

Then rose Imam al-Ḥusayn b. Aḥmad al-Muqtadā al-Hādī (= "whose example should be followed", and "guiding"). He was the third of the *khulafā'* (i.e. Imams of the second heptade), corresponding with the blood condensation (*'alaqa*) in the physical evolution of human body, occupying the same position as Abraham [64] amongst prophets, and Imam Zaynu'l-'ābidīn amongst the early Imams, *atimmā'*, as regards the events which took place under him, the necessity of disguise, manifestation of miracles foreshadowing the nearing manifestation of the fourth Imam [2], and his emigration.

[1] Cf. Coran, LXXVI, 26.

[2] Note this deliberately ambiguous expression: "the *fourth* Imam". Does Sayyid-nā Idrīs mean here the fourth Imam of the second heptade, or the fourth *concealed* Imam?

His *ḥujjat* was Aḥmad, surnamed al-Ḥakīm, a descendant of Imam Ḥusayn, to whom 'Abdu'l-lāh b. Maymūn handed over his position. He was a *ḥujjat* of great rank and standing, the highest amongst the "veils" and "names", the most skilled and exalted.[1]

From him, i.e. the Imam, appeared many revelations to his associates and devotees as it was in the case of Imam Zaynu'l-'ābidīn, who made (the well known) revelation to Jābir b. 'Abdi'l-lāh al-Anṣārī in the vision of *Mīm, Fā, Ḥā, Sīn,* returning then to the form of *'Ayn*[2]. In doing this, he asked Jābir:—"Does thy reason stand this? Such are the "shirts", in all times and periods: shirts are changing, but I am not. And the Prophets and Imams are "temples of Light" through which the Truth shines in Its manifestation".

On this subject the *dā'ī* Ja'far b. Manṣūr, in his *Kitābu'l-Kashf*[3], says: "'*ayn* (i.e. 'Alī) is great, the ultimate limit of all limits. By it indications are made of the Omnipotent Creator, to whom no properties similar to those of His creations can be predicated, nor pollution, nor change in time; but He Himself makes time change, and pass through different periods and epochs, and is the Truth of all eternity. Great is He, the source of eternity, One Who predestines the most intimate motives by which acts

[1] According to the anti-Ismaili sources, 'Abdu'l-lāh b. Maymūn was succeeded by his own *son* Aḥmad. And now it appears that this Aḥmad was a descendant of 'Alī. Apparently he has nothing to do with Abū 'Alī al-Ḥakīm, i.e. Ḥusayn's brother, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad, mentioned in the first book of *al-Azhār* (cf. above, p. 31). Which is true, and which is false? Most probably both statements are equally baseless, and are pure fiction intended to reconcile the "generally known facts" about the Fatimide genealogy with the silence of Ismaili sources. 'Abdu'l-lāh b. Maymūn by this time should have been nearly 200 years old.

[2] This refers to the transfiguration miracle, narrated in the *Ghāyatu'l-mawālīd*, exactly in the same way as it appears in the *Ummu'l-kitāb*, in which Muḥammad al-Bāqir appears to the vision of Jābir ibn 'Abdi'l-lāh al-Anṣārī in the form of Muḥammad, Fāṭima, Ḥasan, Ḥusayn, and 'Alī. It is strange that here the miracle is attributed to Zaynu'l-'ābidīn. Most probably this is unceremonious adjustment of tradition to the author's own theorising. What were these "many revelations" by al-Ḥusayn b. Aḥmad is neither explained here, nor in the *'Uyūnu'l-akhbār*.

[3] Cf. *Guide*, No. 50. An edition of it is being prepared by Prof. R. Strothmann.

are decided. He always remains the Something that humanity knows, at any period and epoch, and praises in all His " houses ", differing from all forms created by Him, unique in the perfection of His guidance, One in the eyes of those who can know Him, living in the hearts of those who praise Him, glory be to Him, or even those who know (His) "veil" only. He is clad in Glory [**65**] and Perfection, which belong to the furthest limit of hopes and causes. God the All-high has nothing to do with those who recognise any other Deity beside Him, and worship another god, or a mortal person whom He has not appointed (as His Lieutenant), or recognise a lord whom he has not sent to men". This is what he (Ja'far b. Manṣūr) says.

The "Great '*ayn*" is the First Reason, the Supreme Creative Substance (*al-Ibdā' al-Afḍal*), which makes itself manifested (to the human perception) in the most perfect guise, while, at the same time, it is deeply hidden at the bottom of every creation, so much that none has the mental power to comprehend it. The '*ayn* is great because God the All-high said (Cor., XLIII, 3):—"Verily it is in the "Mother of Books" with Us, high and wise ('*Aliyyun Ḥakīmun*)". And whosoever has inherited his (i.e. 'Alī's) position, which is unique, the same applies to him also. And it is inevitable that every high position should have a holy "veil"; and his must be the highest and the most glorious "proof", *ḥujjat*, which is the most exalted of all such *ḥujjats*, standing just below the greatest rank of the Imamat, which is the limit of all religious ranks (*ḥudūd*), the ultimate goal of creation, and the manifestation of the Divine bounty and generosity. Do then understand, brother, the nature of the *ḥijāb*, its properties and functions, by learning all that thou canst collect about it, in order that thou mayest be saved, entering the abode of bliss with the saints of God.

To return now to the story of Imam al-Ḥusayn al-Muqtadā. He rose to complete the task of his father, his teachings, and institutions. He epitomised the Encyclopaedia into a useful

and instructive Synopsis (*al-Jāmi'a*) [1]. He also sent his *dā'īs* (everywhere), and they had a great success in converting many peoples to the true religion, because the appearance of the promised Mahdī was drawing nearer. He (Imam Ḥusayn) sent to the Yaman al-Ḥusayn b. al-Faraḥ b. Ḥawshab (who later on became known as) Manṣūr.

Astrologers and horoscopists were foretelling the early advent of the Mahdī, gladdening the masses with their tidings of the early arrival of his authority. And soon kings and enemies (of the Imam) perceived the change clearly, so that many of them, as the king of Ṣan'ā and some others, [**66**] gave up their authority [2].

[Follows a very important, but very obscure passage]: Soon after this the Imam, the Master of the Epoch (*al-Imām Ṣāḥibu'z-zamān*,— other than al-Ḥusayn?) proceeded to his emigration towards the West, while al-Mahdī was with him (under his protection, *fī kanfi-hi*). He died (*aẓhar an-naqlat*) while travelling, appointing (before his death) as his trustee his own brother, Sa'īdu'l-khayr, as the guardian and trustee for his son (al-Mahdī? or al-Qā'im?). Sa'īdu'l-khayr brought him up (whom? — al-Mahdī, or al-Qā'im?). He (Sa'īd), by the order of the defunct Imam, was called the Imam, screening the real Man of God (*Waliyyu'l-lāh*), and thus concealing his high position from his own followers until the time of his manifestation arrived, and his light rose. He (who,— the late Imam, or Sa'īdu'l-khayr?) ordered the *dā'īs* to do this, as also to call him (whom? — Sa'īdu'l-khayr himself, or al-Mahdī, or al-Qā'im?) — "the Rising Sun" [3], in order to divert the unwelcome attention of the enemies from the (real) Man of God, his (whose?) son (or descendant? — *waladi-hi*) al-Qā'im, who had to be the Imam after him (whom? — the defunct Imam, or Sa'īdu'l-khayr?).

[1] This obviously refers to the *Jāmi'a*, an epitome of the Encyclopaedia of *Ikhwānu's-ṣafā*. Cf. above, p. 35, note 2.

[2] Obviously an allusion to some detail in the conquest of the Yaman.

[3] In all Ismaili works the epithet "Rising Sun" is applied to al-Mahdī.

Nobody knew about all this, knowing nothing about the mystery of God concerning him (whom ?), except for the sincerest devotees, trusted, pure, good, and capable of knowing (and keeping) the mystery of God concerning His Men, realising the importance of what has been revealed to them by His trusted servants (*aṣfiyā'*). And at last came the time of the Advent. The *dā'īs* intensified their propaganda, (openly) pointing out (to the masses) whom they were ordered to point out, as their Master (whom ?). They explained his rights (*faḍl*) to his followers, guided them to him, and spread the glad tidings that the Sun was rising from its place of setting, and promising that this was going to happen in the near future: it was to appear from behind the veils that had so far screened it [1].

11. (Al-Mahdī bi'l-lāh).

Then rose al-Mahdī bi'l-lāh. Propaganda in his favour spread everywhere, and his opponents received clear indications (of his success), taking necessary action. He manifested himself in Sijilmāsa, with the help of Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh, who was in charge of the propaganda in the West,— may God sanctify his spirit! With him was Imam [2] al-Qā'im *bi-amri'l-lāh* Muḥammad b. 'Abdi'l-lāh, the true Imam (*al-mustaḥaqq*) after him on the throne of the caliphs, and in whose favour the propaganda was carried on by all the *dā'īs* (*al-awliyā'*) [3]. And al-Mahdī was his (al-Qā'im's) tutor, pointing his high office to his followers.

[67] Al-Mahdī bi'l-lāh was the fourth amongst the *khulafā'* (i.e. the Imams of the second heptade). His position was similar

[1] As mentioned above (cf. p. 50 sq.), this is obviously an intentionally obscured paraphrase of the passage from the *Ghāyatu'l-mawālīd*, dealing with the matter. Without it the passage seems to be quite unintelligible. It is yet another instance of the "truth reserved for the trusted few" in esoteric works.

[2] Here the word Imām is obviously added to avoid misunderstanding, and to show that the words *al-Qā'im*, etc., are the name, not the technical term.

[3] Again the same faint implication of al-Qā'im being the main figure, while al-Mahdī, as mentioned in the next sentence, was "his guardian and tutor". Nevertheless, the author proceeds to treat al-Mahdī on the same lines as other Imams.

to that of the "clot of blood" (*madghat*) in the physical evolution of man. He corresponded to his ancestor al-Bāqir, and to the Prophet Moses, the owner of the miraculous staff, the one who worked miracles and produced Divine signs. His miracles were obvious, and his signs clear. He also corresponded to the sun, in the universe, the fourth of the powers, which exercises its influence upon what is higher and what is lower than itself in the natural world.

He stood firmly by what was predicted and promised by his great ancestor, Muḥammad the Seal of the Prophets, the Lord of the Saints, who announced his advent on many occasions, and in numerous indications. Thus he said that about the end of the third century after his *Hijra* "the sun shall rise from the place at which it sets." And in fact the sun really rose, and its miracles spread.

He was the greatest Veil, the holiest and greatest "Gate", the bearer of what God has entrusted to him of His trust, which he handed over to al-Qā'im bi-amri'l-lāh, his son, which was to belong to him on the completion of his education and studies, as he was his heir, just as 'Alī was with regard to Muḥammad the Apostle of God [1].

His miracles and signs became manifested, and his *dā'īs* explained his rights (*faḍl*). His propaganda appeared in the Yaman, and Maghrib; and intense sorrow disappeared from the hearts of the Muslims when they knew about the approach of his enthronement. When on his way to the Maghrib he reached Egypt, and had acquired fame on his way in different countries, which became filled with talk and rumours about him, astrologers came to the governor of Egypt. He ordered them to prepare a horoscope of different towns in order to discover in which province (*jazīra*), and in which town he was residing. When

[1] This again clearly implies that al-Mahdī was a temporary "trustee" of the sacred "deposit", belonging to al-Qā'im. All this may be an example of the mystic reasoning in which two mutually excluding statements are both accepted as true.

the Man of God learnt of this, he gave orders to fill a large copper basin with water, set in the middle of it a chair, [68] and sat on it. The astrologers then said to the governor: "Verily, he (al-Mahdī), is in a town with copper walls, in a citadel, surrounded by water". But the governor persisted in commanding horoscopes of different towns, and ultimately traced him. He was seized, together with al-Qā'im, and thrown into prison [1].

When they were brought into the prison, they found there many people, already confined for a long time. Then al-Mahdī asked them, whether they wanted to get out with him. The people began to sneer, making signs to each other, and said that they wanted to go with him to Syria, but he was referring to something impossible. Thereupon al-Mahdī stepped towards the door, struck it off, took a piece of charcoal, and drew on the door the outlines of a boat. Having completed this, he invited those who wished to escape to take a seat on the door. He sat there with his son, and all the others, except for one, who disbelieved all this. And then he saw the door going up into the air, floating in it; it fell, and broke its base, and landed on the Nile. News of this spread, and those who disbelieved him, were disappointed. The people gazed at the door floating on the Nile, and became certain that the expected Mahdī, who was predicted to them, had arrived. Rumours of this spread, but his enemies left him in peace.

He went to Sijilmāsa, and then to Qayrawān and Raqqāda, accepting the oath of allegiance from converts, who were very numerous. His manifestation at Sijilmāsa took place with the help of his *dā'ī*, Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh, may God have mercy on him! The latter remained there for some time, until his own brother Abū'l-'Abbās insinuated himself into his favours, and made him commit an error. He declared that al-Mahdī was not the Mahdī. Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh ash-Shī'ī began to come into the

[1] This and the subsequent miracle are a valuable addition to the already large collection of secret matters to be confided only to the trusted and fully initiated ones, for whom such esoteric works are intended.

presence of al-Mahdī with his shirt turned the wrong side, for [69] three days in succession, without realising this, preoccupied with his plot against the Man of God, whom he opposed and deceived. May God give us refuge from doing evil after good, and conceiving doubt after sincere faith! Or from apostasy after devotion! We pray Him rather to send us death while we still remain sincerely faithful to Him...

... Then al-Mahdī summoned Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh ash-Shī'ī, and executed him. But after his death he forgave him, and prayed for him, never undoing what he had done soundly before falling into error. He executed with him his brother Abū'l--'Abbās, who had become very conceited, and was heading obstinately towards the same thing as Iblīs had done. He took from him his rank in the *da'wat*, completely disowned him, informing all the people of this, and of the fact that he had confessed to having committed an obvious error, losing for himself the advantages of this world and the next, by associating with the mischiefmakers.

Thereafter he gave orders to build Mahdiyya [1], and when he had completed it, and made it ready for occupation, he transferred thither his household, making it the *dār hijra,* i.e. refuge, for al-Qā'im bi'l-lāh, the Commander of the Faithful. He then ordered someone to shoot an arrow thence, and the arrow fell in the place which he indicated, and al-Mahdī gave orders to build a mosque (*muṣallā*), saying:—"As far as here will reach the Dajjāl (Antichrist), Mukhlid b. Kaydād, may God curse him". And he added, turning towards a Shi'ite, called Mūsā b. Aḥmad: "O! Mūsā, to-day I feel sure of the safety of the Fatimid women (?)". At that time the accursed enemy of God, Mukhlid b. Kaydād, had just been born in the country of Sudan, in the place called Kūkwā (or Kawkawā?).

Al-Mahdī energetically organised his propaganda, and his *dā'īs* worked in many countries. [70] The earth became

[1] A suburb of Qayrawān, which was later on abandoned.

illuminated with the Light of its Lord, and the lights of God began to come out from behind their screens. He appointed (as his successor) Muḥammad al-Qā'im bi-amri'l-lāh, the Commander of the Faithful, instructing his missionaries to proclaim his obvious rights; and he returned to him his trust (*amānat*), and handed over to him his rank (*rutba*)[1]. He returned to al-Qa'im the deposit which was entrusted to him by God (*wadī'at*), giving his (whose ?) other sons their proper share in it. Thus he deposited the rightful property with its real owner, returning it to its legitimate repository, for the sake of the principle according to which there can be only one Man of God (*tawḥīdan li-Waliyyi'l-lāh*), in recognition of his exalted position. In doing this he followed the example of his ancestor, Muḥammad the Muṣṭafā, who appointed as his trustee 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib on the day of Ghadīr Khumm, when his soul gave him a warning of approaching death, and the day of his resting in peace approached. Similarly, al-Qā'im bi-amri'l-lāh was the Light of God shining from behind the greatest Veil, and the proof of his high mission was that the Arabs were thrown into commotion by his claims (*faḍli-hi*). The *dā'īs* approached him (obviously al-Qa'im), and he informed them that al-Mahdī bi'l-lāh was the most excellent example to them with regard to himself[2].

Al-Mahdī bi'l-lāh accumulated many supplies in Mahdiyya, fortified it, provided it with money and a garrison, which occupied it. He had a slave, called Jawdhar[3], who was brought

[1] The appointment of al-Qā'im as the successor of al-Mahdī (obviously as a measure to insure the continuation of the dynasty in case of a successful attempt on al-Mahdī's life) was made immediately after the liquidation of the conspiracy of Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh ash-Shī'ī in 298/911. What *amānat* al-Mahdī returned to al-Qā'im, and how he surrendered his *rutba* (= Imamat ?), is not explained, but there is little doubt that this refers to the secret wisdom of the Alids. We see that after this act he still ruled undisputed for 24 years, in perfect agreement with al-Qā'im. And although al-Mahdī had several other sons, there is no mention of any intrigue on their part. Cf. also p. 265.

[2] All this again clearly alludes to the difference in the status of al-Mahdī and al-Qā'im, the latter occupying a higher position.

[3] Cf. above, p. 11 sq. As stated further on, p. 265, he died on his way to the newly founded Cairo, in 363/974.

up in the principles of purity and piety, of following the right example of his masters, and their guidance, living a very pious life similar to their own, never forgetting his humble position with regard to them. He was entrusted with finances and superintending the affairs of the palace of al-Mahdī. The latter entrusted all this to him, knowing his perfect piety and devotion in his desire to be clean before the face of God at any moment.

It is narrated that once he was sitting there when one of the servants of the palace [71] went into the presence of al-Mahdī, and then came out, telling him that he had received orders to satisfy the requests of certain people, and referring them to him, Jawdhar. He added that the Lord said to him:—"Go now, may God bless thee". The man came out frowning, and when Jawdhar looked at him, he did not approve of his attitude, and asked what was the matter. He replied:—"I hoped that our Lord would grant something to my request. But I received nothing from him". Jawdhar said to him: "Verily, the blessing that thou hast received from him, and which he invoked on thee is greater than anything in this frail world". The man replied:— "I wanted something more substantial than a blessing". Said Jawdhar:— "And what about selling me this blessing, given to thee by our Lord, for ten gold coins?" The man agreed at once. Whereupon Jawdhar counted him out ten gold coins, demanding from him a formal receipt, for the lawful sale, and handing over the blessing, without the right to cancel the transaction, or its intention, finally, and without any reservation. Thus Jawdhar received what he had bought, and they parted completely satisfied with the deal. Next morning al-Mahdī summoned Jawdhar, asked him about this, and he narrated it. Then the Imam said:— "May the blessing of God be in thee and with thee". And he gave him 100 *mithqāls* of gold, tenfold of what he paid.[1] This his prayer and blessing had a permanent effect on Jawdhar, and he served after al-Mahdī also al-Qā'im, al-Manṣūr, and al-Mu'izz.

[1] This anecdote is taken from the first part of the *Sīrat Jawdhar*.

He travelled with the latter when he went to the East (i.e. Egypt), and died on his way there [1].

When the laws of the rightly guiding *da'wat* (peace of God be upon its Master!) became strengthened in Mahdiyya, and those who were concealing themselves in the cave of religious disguise could come out into the open. there came the day of the death and ended the life of Imam al-Mahdī bi'l-lāh. He handed over his dignity to his son al-Qā'im, and the sacred trust (*wadī'at wa amānat*), which was deposited with him. Then he died, departing to his Lord. [72]

When al-Qā'im wanted to bury him in a side room of his palace, none was present with him at the side of the grave when he had to deposit there the body of al-Mahdī, except for Jawdhar, to whom he said:— "Verily, it is unlawful for an Imam to bury his predecessor without raising a witness for himself. Thus this is unlawful to me also, without such a witness (*ḥujjat*), and I have selected thee, in preference to everybody for revealing him". And he recited the *āyat* of the Coran (XXXIII, 72):— "Verily, we offered the deposit to the heavens, and earth, and hills, and they refused to accept it",— to the end of the verse.

Then he said:— "Come near me". And when Jawdhar came near, he ordered to him to stretch his hand, while Jawdhar was trembling with fear. And the Imam said:— "Verily, we accept from thee the oath of allegiance to God, and the firm promise, that thou wilt keep it concealed (*'an-nī* — on my behalf ?) what I shall show thee and reveal to thee". Jawdhar replied: "Yes, my Lord, may God bless thee!" Then the Imam said:— "My son Ismā'īl, surnamed al-Manṣūr, is my witness (*ḥujjat*) and my heir apparent: know his position and rights". Jawdhar duly concealed his secret statement and order, until the time came when God wished this to become public. Then al-Qā'im buried al-Mahdī.[2]

[1] Obviously in 363/974.
[2] This is also taken from the beginning of the *Sīrat Jawdhar*.

Jawdhar was in the service of the Imams, and devoutly worked for them, as to a certain extent is related in the book of (his secretary) Manṣūr, who described in it his life and service with the four Imams (i.e. *Sīrat Jawdhar*). Whoever wants to read it, it is well-known and famous.

There is no strength and power except in God, and there is no Imam or *ḥujjat* except by His help (*ta'yīd*). There is no power for us except in sticking fast to His proof on the earth. And there is no power or strength for us except in God, the High, the Great (*al-'Aliyyu'l-'Aẓīm*)! [73]

12. (Abū'l-Qāsim Muḥammad al-Qā'im bi-amri'l-lāh).

Then rose the Imam *Who ariseth*, Muḥammad Abū'l-Qāsim — the prayers of God be upon him, and His blessings and best praises! He was the fifth of the *khulafā'* (i.e. the Imams of the second heptade), corresponding with the bones (in the physical evolution of human body), with his ancestor Imam aṣ-Ṣādiq, the fifth of the *atimmā'*, and the Messiah Jesus son of Mary, the Spirit of God, the Reviver of the dead, and the Purifier of the blind and leprous. He was the Root of Light (*aṣlu'n-Nūr*). and the second of the Manifest Imams, corresponding with the Commander of the Faithful 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, in that he rose after the Prophet Muḥammad, and in what passed over to him, point by point.[1] He was the repository of the mystery of God, and His "Word", remaining in his (i.e. the Prophet's) progeny, till the day of the Resurrection (according to the well-known *ḥadīth*).

The Commander of the Faithful 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib was the first of those occupying the greatest position, during the period of Muḥammad. And so was Imam al-Qā'im bi-amri'l-lāh the first *qā'im* who rose after al-Mahdī bi'l-lāh. He was endowed with great rights (*faḍl*), and exalted position, which the majority of learned theologians could not even comprehend. Nobody

[1] The expression *aṣlu'n-Nūr* (the *real* Light ?), and the comparison of the position of al-Qā'im and al-Mahdī with that of 'Alī and the Prophet again alludes to the difference in their standing.

knew his real religious position in all its implications (*bi-ḥaqīqati-hi*), except for the Imam al-Mahdī bi'l-lāh, and the Imams from his progeny, just as nobody knew the real position of the Commander of the Faithful 'Alī except the Apostle of God, and the Imams from his house.

Jābir b. 'Abdi'l-lāh al-Anṣārī narrates from Imam Zaynu'l-'ābidīn, who ordered to him to tell of the appearance of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib to him in his Luminous Substance (*bi'n-nūrāniyyat*). He said: "I was sitting once in the presence of the Commander of the Faithful 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, when there entered Salmān and Jundab,— may God be satisfied with them! They greeted the Amīr, and sat down. 'Alī returned their greetings, and said:— By my life, verily this (knowledge) is obligatory in respect of every true believer, because a slave of God [74] will not become perfect in his faith until he recognises myself in my (real) Luminous Substance. If he only knows me in this my present form, this is only that in which God tests his heart as to the strength of his faith, and examines his mind. He, the faithful, can only by this become one seeing what he wants to know. The one who fails is he who doubts, and is obsessed by doubts. O, Salmān, Jundab had said to thee this hour:— "Let us go, and ask him (i.e. 'Alī), about knowing him in his (real) Luminous Substance". And he (Salmān) said: "Very well, let it be so! Let him inform us about his Luminous Substance, and the knowledge of God".

'Alī continued:— You have been only ordered to worship God, in all sincerity towards Him, according to the faith of the *ḥanīfs*, offering prayers, paying *zakāt*,— such is the religion of the *qiyāmat*. He (God) means (by this) that the true believers are ordered to profess the oneness of God (*tawḥīd*), and this implies absolute sincerity in obedience to Him. The expression "*ḥanīfs*" means the acceptance of the Prophetic mission of Muḥammad, because he is the Lord of the *ḥanīfs*.[1] The expression "offer

[1] As is known, there is much uncertainty about the real meaning of the term *ḥanīf*, so often used in the Coran. Muslim theologians treat it as

prayers" refers to my *walāyat*, i.e. sympathy with my claims. Whoever supports these, offers the prayer, as is said in the Coran (II, 42):— "Seek aid with patience and prayer, though it is a hard thing save for the humble". But God the All-high does not say: both these are hard, because the majority of men accept the Prophetic mission of Muḥammad, but only a few are firm in their affection (*walāyat*) to me,— only those who are "humble". And similarly He said (XXII, 44): "a deserted well and lofty palace". The "palace" here alludes to the Prophet, and the "well" to myself: by God, they have deserted allegiance to me (*walāyat-ī*)! And the expression "pay *zakāt*" symbolises the allegiance to the Imams from my descendants. This is (the real) *zakāt*: the one who pays it, follows the religion of the *qiyāmat*, as I shall explain to you, o, Salmān and Jundab!"

"Muḥammad and myself are One Light, from the Light of God. God has ordered this Light to split into two halves, and said to one half: "Be Muḥammad", and to the other:— "Be 'Alī". This is why [75] the Prophet said:— "'Alī is from me, and I am from 'Alī. Nobody can act on my behalf except 'Alī".

"O, Salmān and Jundab,— thus Muḥammad has become the Prophet of God, al-Muṣṭafā, and I have become his trustee, al-Murtaḍā. He, Muḥammad, has become the Teacher (*Nāṭiq*), and I have become the Silent (*Ṣāmit*); he uttered a warning, and I guide the people. Muḥammad has become the Master of Paradise, and I have become the Master of Hell, saying to it: "That is thine, and this is mine". Muḥammad has become the lord of mercy, and I have become the lord of terror (*rajfa*, commotion); he has brought Divine indications (*dalālāt*), and I have brought miraculous proofs (*āyāt*). Muḥammad has become the Seal of the Prophets, and I have become the Seal of the Trustees. I have destroyed the earlier generations (*qurūn*), I am the "Great Message" (*an-Nabā'u'l-'Aẓīm*), in which they were at variance.

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denoting the follower of the (hypothetic) "religion of Abraham". It obviously was an Aramaic word, applied to the followers of a religious sect in Arabia.

Muḥammad took up preaching, and I took up the sword. I am the Command of God, Who makes the spirit (*rūḥ*) descend by His order upon any of His slaves to whom He pleases to send it (XL, 15). And the authority (*amr*) is from the Spirit of God, which is not given except to the Prophet and his Trustee. To whomsoever God gives of His Spirit, He makes him different from ordinary men, exalting him above ordinary mortals, and endowing him with supreme authority, so that he can kill and bring back to life, and know what has happened and what is going to happen, by such Spirit, and possess the knowledge of what is in the Heaven; he can ascend there, and again descend upon the earth." [1]

"O, Salmān and Jundab, Muḥammad has become (oral) mention, and I have become writing (*al-kitāb*), as God Himself has said (LXV, 11):— "God hath sent unto you a Word, an Apostle". And also (XXI, 10):— "We have sent unto you a Book in which there is warning for you". Muḥammad is the Testimony of God to His creation, and I am his proof (*ḥujjat*) whom God has raised; and He has given to me what He never gave to any one. As God commanded (V, 71): "O, Apostle, deliver the message that was sent down to thee from thy Lord; but if thou wouldst not deliver it, thy Apostleship shall not be accomplished. And God shall defend thee from the people". [76]

"God promised to me, and accepted my oath of allegiance. I am the "Guarded Table" (*al-Lawḥu'l-maḥfūz*), as God has revealed to me what is in it. O, Salmān and Jundab! Muḥammad is the chapter "*Yā-Sīn*", and I am the chapter "*al-Qur'ānu'l-ḥakīm*" (both are expressions at the beginning of the XXXVI-th chapter). Muḥammad is the letter *n* (*nūn*), and I am the Pen (*qalam*); he is *Ṭā-hā*, and I am "*al-Qur'ān*" (expressions at the

[1] All this obviously belongs to a very late phase of Shi'ite speculation, not earlier than the fourth/tenth c. The contrast between the Prophet as the manifestation of the *Raḥmān* attributes of God, and 'Alī's of the *Qahhār* and *Jabbār* attributes, is known to Persian Sufism. "The sun is the source of light, but it also blinds one who tries to look directly at it",— as this mystical conception is usually explained.

beginning of several chapters of the Coran). He is the yellow ruby, and I am a red ruby. And there is no difference between myself and Muḥammad: I am Muḥammad, and Muḥammad is I, I am from him, and he is from me. As God said (LV, 19-20):— "He has let loose the two seas that meet together; between them is a barrier they cannot pass". Muḥammad is the *greatest* benefaction of God, and I am the *best* benefaction of God, as He said (LV, 21): "Then which of your Lord's bounties will ye twain deny?" O, Salmān and Jundab, verily our dead never die, and those amongst us who are killed, are not killed in reality. We do not become born, and do not give birth."

Said Jābir: "I touched the earth before him out of respect for what I heard from him, and said: "O, my Lord, it is difficult for me to understand what I heard thee say that thou "hast destroyed the earlier generations", and, secondly, thy words about thy people's dead never dying, and those amongst them who are killed, not being killed in reality".

And 'Alī replied: "O, Jābir, I am an Order from God, because He says (XL, 15):—"The Spirit by His command will descend on whomever He pleases, of His slaves". And God made me His Command, according to the verse (XI, 42): "until at length when Our Order came, and the oven boiled (with regard to the salvation of Noah, whom I saved)". And He said (XI, 84): "And when Our Command came, We made what was high in them low". And with regard to what I said that those amongst us who die do not really die, it is because the Spirit is from God; and that those amongst us who are executed are not really killed, the reason is the same. I am the master of every true believer, male and female, of those who have already come in existence, and who are to come in the future. O, Salmān and Jundab! when I helped, as I did, Prophets with the Spirit, I was speaking by the tongue of Jesus in his cradle. Ādam, Seth, Noah, Sem, Abraham, Ismā'īl, Moses, Joshua, Jesus, Simon, and Muḥammad and myself—all are one, [77] and who sees myself, sees all of them. But I am one of the slaves of God. Do not call us

"lords", but say whatever you like in our praise, because we are the "gates" leading to God, His Proofs, His trusted men amongst the people, His lieutenants, and the leaders (Imams) of His religion, His "face", His "sides", His Command, and the *ṣirāṭ* towards Him. Through us He metes out punishment, by us He metes out reward. He has chosen us from His creations, making us pure and clean. And if anyone asks: why has He done this, how? For what reason? For what purpose? — verily, such a man is an infidel: "He (God) is not asked (for explanations) as to His acts, and they ask for these (XXI, 23)".

"O, Salmān and Jundab! Who believes in what I have said and explained, commented upon, and clarified,— such a man is a believer whose heart God has tested for his faith. And if he distinguishes between my expressions and their hidden meaning, he is a truly intelligent (*mustabṣir*) and knowing man, understanding and perfect. But those who feel doubts as to what is said, or suspicious, or are negatively disposed, or give up,— those are sinners and defaulters. O, Salmān and Jundab! I bring humanity to life, and I make them die, I create them, and nourish them, and heal the leprous and the blind. I give you what you eat and what you throw out in your houses, by the Command of My Lord. And the Rightful Imams from my progeny are acting in the same way, because all of us are one and the same thing, manifested in all times. We wish if God wishes, and we dislike if God dislikes. Woe to those who deny our rights, and what God has given to us, our mission to increase His might and will. God has given us all that is the highest, the greatest, and the most important of all these. He has given us the Greatest Name, by uttering which we may, if we wish, ascend the Heaven, make the sun, moon, and stars to obey us. But with all this we eat and drink, walk in the market place, and do what we will, by the command of God, our Lord, as is said: "... honoured servants, who do not speak until He speaks, but at His bidding do they act" (XXI, 26-27).

"This is what one must know about myself in my Luminous Substance. Learn this, both of you, be guided by this, and be blessed, by the will of God!" [78]

This is what he said. We have cited this in order that intelligent people may know his position with regard to the Prophet. And this his position was exactly the same as that of Imam al-Qā'im bi-amri'l-lāh with regard to al-Mahdī bi'l-lāh, as light from light, and manifestation (of Divine power), one like the other, one in substance, as the Divine power testifies this. Thus have Divine signs been manifested, and the words of thy Lord became true and justified.

As al-Qā'im bi-amri'l-lāh was similar in his position to 'Alī at the period of his manifestation, his reign was confounded by the appearance of the accursed enemy of God, Mukhlid b. Kaydād, Abū Yazīd, the Antichrist (*Dajjāl*), who appeared in his reign just as enemies of God rose in the reign of 'Alī, Commander of the Faithful. The original place of the accursed Abū Yazīd, the Squinting, was under Abū 'Ammār the Blind, a teacher. Mukhlid belonged to the persuasion of the Khārijites, the Ḥarūriyya branch. He succeeded in dominating the true believers, introducing impiety into the world. His oppression was on the increase, and his strength continually grew until he approached Mahdiyya, as far as the Muṣallā, which was built where the arrow of al-Mahdī fell (as mentioned above),[1] who shot it in his foreknowledge as to where the enemy of God should attain. He was an Ibāḍite who believed in the necessity of cursing the Commander of the Faithful, 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, and denying any respect to him. He made it permissible to shed the blood of his descendants, and to abuse them. He came down with his troops to Mahdiyya, and besieged it. Al-Qā'im gave orders to lock the gates. The fighting was fierce, the calamity was great, and the danger was increasing. Then al-Qā'im began to issue the supplies which had been stored by al-Mahdī, dis-

[1] Cf. p. 262.

tributing these to his soldiers and the poor citizens in the town. But these supplies began to come to an end. Thereupon the besieged began to come out [79] and escape. The accursed one moved his troops, mostly consisting of Berbers, ordering them to watch the road. They used to kill every one whom they would overpower, looting him, and raping his womenfolk. At last they even began to cut open the intestines of men and women, in search of the concealed gold and precious stones. They even used to buy and sell the intestines. The accursed one became as heretical as the Qarmatians (*taqarmaṭ*),[1] began to think much of himself, doing all sorts of impious and revolting things, and rebelling against God . . . His authority became strong, and he occupied all the provinces of the Maghrib. He was similar to the enemies of Ja'far aṣ-Ṣādiq, and the enemies of the Commander of the Faithful 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, or those of Jesus, the Spirit of God.

When the hour of death came to al-Qā'im, and his last moment approached, he gave orders to his faithful and devout slave Jawdhar to produce the testament (made at the time of the burial) of al-Mahdī bi'l-lāh. He (obviously Jawdhar) handed it (the document) over to the religious dignitaries (*shuyūkhu'd-da'wat*), and Ṣawlāt (?) read it to them.[2] He was a dignitary of (the highest) degree (amongst those present). Jawdhar came near him, handed over the document to him, and he, the high priest, read it to them, and handed back the document to Jawdhar. The latter then returned it to the Imam. The Imam then again gave the orders to read it to them. Ṣawlāt (again)

[1] It is not clear what is implied by the verb *taqarmaṭa*, if this does not refer to the proverbial impiety and brutality of the Qarmatians.

[2] The passage is very difficult to understand, unless we suppose that al-Qā'im was so ill that he could not speak, and expressed his will only by signs. It is apparently a quotation from the *Sīrat* of Jawdhar, which is not accessible to me for reference at present. It is not clear whether the word *ṣawlāt* is a personal name, or a technical term. In the Sing. *ṣawlat* means "rush, violence, sudden attack; authority, strength". Here it is obviously applied to a person. I could not find any other example of this name. Perhaps this may be an early mistake which was ever since blindly repeated in newer copies.

read the document, and returned it (to Jawdhar). Those present did not understand the purpose of the ceremony, as they did not know the secret proceedings which took place on the day of the burial of al-Mahdī, when the Imam had given orders to Jawdhar (to keep it secret). He, the Imam, entrusted (*istawda'a*) Jawdhar with the (will concerning) the position of his son, al-Manṣūr, and his appointment of him as his own successor, taking an oath from him (i.e. Jawdhar) to the former. Thus Jawdhar was entrusted (*mustawda'*) with (the document appointing) al-Manṣūr bi'l-lāh (as heir apparent). For this reason it was so that (the fact of the existence of) the testament was not revealed to any dignitary except for Jawdhar.

And when the Imam for the third time repeated his orders, he, Jawdhar, turned towards them (i.e. the dignitaries), and asked them whether they recognised the high position which he occupied in the service of his masters, and the extent to which they trusted him, and relied upon him. The dignitaries then informed him that they knew about this. Then Jawdhar said to them that the Imam had given orders to him [**80**] to produce the testament in order that Ṣawlāt should take from them the oath of allegiance to his son Ismā'īl. Then he, Jawdhar, produced [1] the document of the will of al-Qā'im in favour of al-Manṣūr Ismā'īl. The dignitaries knelt in obedience to his appointment by al-Qā'im. The latter (also) ordered to (continue) the struggle against Abū Yazīd, the Antichrist, the curse of God be upon him!

Thereafter al-Manṣūr bi'l-lāh came up with his Divinely blessed troops, arranged an agreement with the (Berber) tribes, and chased away Abū Yazīd from the Muṣallā.

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[1] It seems obvious that what was read at first was only the address or the label on the scroll, or, perhaps, the seals on the cover. Only after all these ceremonies Jawdhar opened and read the document itself.

5. From the *Asrāru'n-nuṭaqā'*.

(For the work and the author see above, pp. 18-19; for the text see Extract 5.)

[81] ... Then rose the Saint of God, after him (i.e. Muḥammad al-Bāqir), the Lieutenant of God on the earth, and the repository of His Light, Ja'far b. Muḥammad, by the Command of God, and His inspiration,[1] for the revival of the preaching of religion, of the practices introduced by the Apostles of God, and the gathering of the faithful around the formula of "sincerity" (*kalimatu'l-ikhlāṣ*).[2] His *dā'īs* went to different provinces of the earth. He raised the lighthouse of religion; books were compiled from his teaching and the tradition related by him; these spread to every country. And when the Command of God came to him to hand over (his high office), he summoned his dignitaries (*nuqabā'*) and specially deserving followers,[3] just as it was done by other Imams and Prophets before him, and handed over his authority to his son Ismā'īl, by the Command of God and His inspiration of him, making them witnesses of this his appointment.

Thus Ismā'īl became the Gate to God (*Bābu'l-lāh*), and His Praying niche (*miḥrāb*), the repository of His Light, the link (*sabab*) between Him and His creation,— both we and you admit this.[4] And then his body was caused to disappear during the

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[1] This "esoteric" formula seems to be peculiar to the works of Ja'far b. Manṣūri'l-Yaman; from here it is introduced into some portions of the *Zahru'l-ma'ānī* of Sayyid-nā Idrīs, quoted above.

[2] Obviously the formula of *tawḥīd*, or profession of strict monotheism.

[3] It is interesting that here the expression which is used, *ikhwān*, really means brethren, members of the confraternity. That it was not intended to mean Ja'far's real brothers, is clear from other similar passages further on, in which the term *aṣḥāb*, associates, is used instead of this. According to the '*Umdatu'ṭ-ṭālib*, 173, Imam Ja'far had no brothers.

[4] The author all through his work carries on controversy with the Ithnā-'asharīs, apparently having in view some particular work, which he, however, does not mention by name. His references, if collected out of the whole of the *Asrāru'n-nuṭaqā'*, might, perhaps, contain interesting

lifetime of his father, as a mystery, intended to protect him from his enemies, and as a test for his followers. As has already been narrated about Ismā'īl b. Ibrāhīm, God had never done such a thing as He has done with Ismā'īl, making him predecease his father. Both, we and you, accept the tradition concerning aṣ-Ṣādiq saying:— "Verily God acts as He wills and pleases in everything except for the matters concerning the Imamat". The slandering of God is the greatest sin which you have committed, by interfering with what God had ordered to happen: "They came up to blow out the Light lit by God with their mouths" (Cor. LXI, 8). You believed in the cancellation of the Divine Command. But you did not know that Ismā'īl never left this world without leaving in his stead his son, who was of mature age,[1] and that the Imamat had been handed over to him by the Command of God and His inspiration of him. And that he, Ismā'īl b. Ja'far, when the desire of God became known to him, [82] received an inspiration to hand over the authority to his son Muḥammad. He then summoned the dignitaries (*nuqabā'*), and those specially trusted amongst his followers, and handed it over to him in the presence of the chosen ones alone, in secret, in order not to expose him to danger. He acted as did Hārūn with Joshua (Yūsha' b. an-Nūn), when he appointed one of the dignitaries as his lieutenant, to act on behalf of his own son, until

information concerning the evolution of the theory of the Imamat in the Ithna-'ashari doctrine. Here he obviously refers to the fact that the appointment of Ismā'īl as the successor of Imam Ja'far is also admitted by his opponents.

[1] Different early works, as already mentioned above, cf. p. 240, invariably state that the son of Ismā'īl, Muḥammad, was not a small child when his father died. Further on it is mentioned that he was 14. There is nothing impossible in this, because, as I have already shown in my paper, "Imam Ismail", in the JASB, 1923, pp. 305–310, from the Ithna-'ashari sources (entirely supported by the '*Uyūnu'l-akhbār*), Ismā'īl was already an adult in 133/751. It seems that he died soon after this. Thus there is nothing improbable in his having a 14-years old son; therefore it is quite possible that the latter really was about 26 when Imam Ja'far himself died about 148/765. But later esoteric works which present him as a helpless infant simply follow the "standard scheme", which popular sentiment favoured for such occasions. Cf. further on, p. 296.

he came of age.[1] He, Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl, was at that time a grown up, 14 years of age. At such age witness is acceptable from a man, according to law. He (Imam Ismā'īl) did this in anticipation of the calamities and the attack of the infidels which were to befall him. But you spread lies about God and His Saints, by asserting that His Command may be revoked! You have disregarded the words of God, who said (XLIII, 27): "He made it *the word* remaining in his progeny". You treated His word with disregard of what it portends. And you have made the Imamat return to Ja'far aṣ-Ṣādiq. Or has not it been already known from the story of Jacob, that when he received the Command to hand over his authority to Joseph, both his eyes became covered with cataract? When Joseph left the country in search of a refuge (*dār hijrat*), and misfortune befell him, Jacob sat in his place, collecting all his men, and sending his other sons to different places in search of the Owner of the Imamat. And this is what God expressed in Jacob's words addressed to his people (XII, 87): "O, my sons! go and enquire concerning Joseph and his brother, and despair not of God's comfort; for, verily, none need despair of God's comfort save infidels".

And Ja'far aṣ-Ṣādiq, in his purity of soul and spirit, is above any possibility of opposing the decrees of God. But you can see that when the hour of his death arrived, he appointed in his stead his own enemy, al-Manṣūr (the Abbasid caliph, 136–158/754–775), in preference to his own relatives, and even his own

[1] Unfortunately, the name of this guardian is not mentioned. It all sounds rather vague. As very often in such cases it is not easy to see whether there is any historical truth in these stories, or it is simply a case of unceremonious application of the general scheme of parallelism with the supposed Biblical precedents. The latter is most probably the case, because, having no details of the events at his disposal, the author could fill in the blank space with his visualisation of the events as they *should* have been, in accordance with pious theories. In all the references to Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl which we possess, and which are very scanty, including even the somewhat more detailed, although obviously legendary account given in the '*Uyūnu'l-akhbār* (see "Ismailis and Qarmatians", pp. 60–63), there is no mention of any guardian except his grandfather, Imam Ja'far himself.

son.[1] All this was done as a means of protecting [83] them, and as a means to distract danger from the real Man of God. But you have split after these events into parties and sects, neither recognising the first appointment, nor being loyal to the second. A party amongst you regarded him as the last Imam, expecting him to return to life, and to fill it with justice and light even as much as it has been filled with injustice and oppression. Thus you trod the path of the Christians in their belief about Jesus son of Mary, who think that He sits on the right side of God, being ready to return to this world and show the difference between the True and the Wrong, straightening all that has been made crooked.

On the Sects after the Death of Ja'far aṣ-Ṣādiq.

Those who split over the recognition of each of his four sons. We must now discuss those sects which became formed after him, disagreeing over his successor, and depriving the rightful one of his right. And every one who deviates from the truth falls into an error,— we can see this as obvious according to the judgement of reason. And when we know that the futility of the claims of three (of the Imam's sons) is proved, then (there remains) the right of the one, the true chosen heir. Then we may give up what is unreal, and return to what is real.

Let us see what was claimed by the Faṭḥiyya (i.e. the supporters of al-Afṭaḥ, 'Abdu'l-lāh b. Ja'far), who maintained that he was the Imam, and died many years after his father, or what they say as to his being a silent (*Ṣāmit*) Imam. We may see that he died without having left posterity to succeed him in the office, and take charge of the Mystery of God and His wisdom after him. Because the Lieutenant of God on the earth is the repository of His Light, the link between Him and His creation; to him ascend

[1] Apparently the idea underlying this extraordinary statement is an attempt at reconciling theory with plain historical facts. In theory, of course, all authority belonged to Imam Ja'far, although he did not possess it in practice. Therefore the fact that al-Manṣūr possessed, anyhow, this authority, *implies* the fact that he could have it only with the sanction of the "real master of the authority".

his *dā'īs* (*ḥudūd*), as it has been already explained, and as you have seen. To him descends the Divine help (*ta'yīd*). He helps them (i.e. people) by his acts of justice to recognise him properly, [84] and have no doubts as to his rights; and he is the one who inherits and leaves an heir after him, according to the tradition of the saintly people who relate that God has said that a real Imam does not die childless.

Then let us look into what was claimed by the Muḥammadiyya who regarded Muḥammad b. Ja'far as the true Imam. He presented his claims in Mekka,[1] but drew out his sword during the sacred month, in the sacred place, accepted as sacred by the whole of Islam; and it is believed that hostilities in it are forbidden to anyone till the Day of Resurrection. But we see that he rose against the Abbasids in their own dominion, after having lived under their protection. They protected him, and were his kings. Thus he acted contrary to the practice of his ancestor and of the prophets before him who never attacked their enemies in their own house, without finding for themselves a country of refuge (*dār hijra*), in which they could defend themselves, or launch an attack against their enemy from there. Then they conquered (other countries) after their (original) place of refuge.

As we see him acting contrary to the custom of his predecessors, we may understand that if he had really been the proof of God on the earth, he would not have acted contrary to the example (*siyar*) of his forefathers. Therefore we must place him in the position of usurpers, similar to himself. And we (really) see that his opponent has overcome him, seized him, placed a rope around his neck (as a sign of humiliation), and carried him about in different towns on the way to Khorasan, making him ascend the *minbars* of every town that he passed, and renounce his claims, bringing a testimony against himself, recognising his error, and openly admitting that he had committed a sin. All the

[1] As already mentioned above, cf. p. 116, n. 1, special significance was always attached to the fact of claims to the Imamat being presented in Mekka itself, the religious centre of the Islamic world.

Shi'ites completely agree in the belief that the Imam who rises in Mekka cannot err in his profession (*ra'y*). This community relates from the Apostle of God that he predicted the rise of the Imam "whose name will be my name, and the name of his father as the name of my father". But Ja'far had no other son called Muḥammad except this one. And it is possible to call Ja'far 'Abdu'l-lāh (i.e. slave of God) because all the people are slaves of God. [85] Thus we may place this sect in a position similar to other erring sects.

Let us now look into the long story of the supporters of Mūsā b. Ja'far. We find them divided into two branches, but cannot see which of these is more erring than the other. We find that they aped the beliefs of their erring predecessors, claiming that he, Mūsā, was still living until our own day, and that he never died, and never shall die. But we know that he died in the prison of the Abbasids, and his body was thrown outside the prison for three days so that everybody could see him. Thereafter he was buried. His opponent had more power than himself, and divided his inheritance; his wives, "mothers of the Faithful", were remarried after his death, being married to his enemies and adversaries. He had no successor who might prevent them (i.e. the enemies) from marrying his wives, and who would protect his family. But the real successor (of Imam Ja'far) from his son, whose rights you suspect, did protect them, and saved them from such fate, as did all his ancestors, because the real Imam stands by the Command of God to protect the weak, and the people who are in need of his protection (*fuqarā' ilay-hi*).

And if your Imam is not present (in this world), and his return is only expected, then of what use is he to those who live after him, and to those who have to refer to (him) concerning what is permitted or prohibited to them, what is prescribed and commanded (in religion)? Who shall enforce amongst them the institutions of God, and decide their litigation? Verily, when we lose the (living) Imam, we are bound to take refuge under his slaves (ordinary mortals), forgetting God, and heading to injustice,

until we all perish. And if we begin to differ concerning any prescription, we fall into the error of accepting as binding legal opinion and analogy. The Ruler (i.e. God) cannot order us to obey one who does not exist. If this were possible, we should have been ordered to obey one who has not yet been born, and expect him to be born, just as we are expecting (to return) the one who disappeared.

This sect narrates that Imam Ja'far said once: "the name of the Imam (after him) [86] is the name of the Owner of the Torah". And when Mūsā (then a small boy) entered, he said: "welcome, my lord, who is always angry, and does not play".

Let us now see what is claimed by the other branch. We find that it says:— "Recognition of the Imam rests with us. We may enter under the authority of every Imam, whether righteous or erring, and we may at our discretion remain under their jurisdiction, living with them, and be under their protection, regardless whether (their) enemies may shed their (Imams' ?) blood, or confiscate their property, take their wives, or rights". [1]

In accepting such beliefs they go against the practice of all the Prophets of God and Imams of their religion whom we have mentioned above. We may thus see that this talk is utterly senseless, and that those who say such things are the filthiest and vilest of men, because God has ordered us to follow the Prophets, and observe their practice after them, as is said (XXXIII, 21): "Ye had in the Apostle of God a good example". Or the words of the Prophet uttered by him to the community of the faithful,— and his words are not rubbish for which God does not care. He said (Cor. III, 29): "If you love God, follow me, and God will love you". And also (XII, 108): "I call unto God, giving a clear example, myself and those who follow me". And we see the demands of these stupid folk contrary to what he, the Prophet, preached. For this reason we must dissociate ourselves from

[1] This obviously is not the Ithna-'ashari theory, but sounds as if it were confounded with some Zaydī principles.

them, and rèject their Imams who are such as these. They are in our opinion like the erring leaders who, whenever they miss anything in the prescriptions of religion, resort to legal opinion and analogy. We can see that all these sects, mentioned above, claim that they alone are right, and that the others are wrong, and treat each other as infidels.

Then we find those sects which, after the preceding ones, recognise as the Imam Aḥmad b. Mūsā, surnamed 'Alī ar-Riḍā,[1] the same whom al-Ma'mūn appointed (as his successor), striking coins in his name, and proclaiming him [87] as his heir apparent, and the caliph after his death. He summoned ar-Riḍā, and none amongst the Alids and their supporters doubted that the authority was going to pass to him after the death of al-Ma'mūn. The latter was disturbed in his mind, just as it happened with Mu'āwiya b. Yazīd b. Mu'āwiya (the Omayyad caliph Mu'āwiya II, 64/683), when he realised that his forefathers had usurped the rights belonging to others (i.e. Alids), and wished to return these to them.

This is why al-Ma'mūn summoned jurists and theologians from different towns, ordering them to hold a disputation with each other on the subject of Fadak and al-'Awālī, at last returning these to the descendant of Fatima, after proofs had been produced to support their rights.[2] All this was trickery to lure forth the real Owner of Rights. But he did not succeed in his designs, because the latter was concealed, and could not manifest himself before the decreed time came, meanwhile concealing himself from his enemies, and expecting relief when the proper time and hour arrived. And al-Ma'mūn, when he conceived his suspicions, and saw the Alids coming over to him, intended to make inquiries, and collect information. Some of the Abbasids, fearing for their lives, warned him, recalling what their own ancestors had done

[1] According to the *'Umdatu'ṭ-ṭālib*, 175, Mūsā had a son, called Aḥmad, but he had nothing to do with 'Alī ar-Riḍā. It would be very interesting to find out whether this is a mistake, or whether there is something behind all this.

[2] Cf. above, p. 252.

to the ancestors of the Alids, expecting that when the latter won, they would take revenge on them. The Alids, meanwhile, had no doubts that authority was returning to them in this way.

The news reached a man who was touring Syria on behalf of the Imam, who had at that time his residence (*dār hijrat*) in Jerusalem. He wrote to the chief *dā'ī* of the province, warning him of his arrival, and came to him, offering his life in the desire to please God, to obtain salvation after death, and to wage war for the religious cause when this should be required. He came before the *dā'ī*, offering himself, and thus stepping out on the warpath for the true religion of God. When he entered into the presence of al-Ma'mūn, the latter said: "When I obtain the proof concerning him (the real Imam) which I hope to find, which is the secret treasure and the great blessing given by God, the gate of His mercy will be found, may God make thee open it to me!

[88] The *dā'ī* replied: "(As to) the proof for which thou art seeking, (what) I will disclose to thee concerning them (i.e. the Alids) would not merit mercy in thy eyes". He made (him) hear (this) as if being afraid that he was deaf, arguing emphatically, in the manner of one who fears to commit an error.[1] They had a long talk which would take too much space to report in full here, and would take us too far away from the original subject. And ultimately he (al-Ma'mūn) stretched out to him (the *dā'ī*) his hand which was accepted in all sincerity, though (in reality) it was extended with an evil purpose. He (the *dā'ī*) was pleased with al-Ma'mūn, informed him about the existence of (the real Imam) his Master, and conveyed to him (al-Ma'mūn) some of the light of his (the Imam's) guiding teaching. The caliph treated him as his equal in his audience, promising to give up the restrictions (imposed upon the Shi'ites?) in the past years. He, al--Ma'mūn, (promised to) leave him (the Imam?) free until the hour of his advent struck, his destinee was fulfilled, on a predestined day and the date decreed by God. The *dā'ī* stayed with

[1] For *yaḥshī* read *yakhshī*, and for *az-zamān* read *az-zalal*.

the caliph for a long time, being admitted to his private audiences, while he tried his best to please him (the *dā'ī*). The caliph had many discussions with him, on different subjects, until his "education" had become complete. And the *dā'ī* believed that his position became strong, that the caliph's faith was sincere, and that he abandoned all his former ideas. For this reason the *dā'ī* informed him about the position of the one appointed by God, what he is expected to do, and his mission (*wad'*). Then he went away.

When al-Ma'mūn remained alone, and reflected over the matter, this 'Alī b. Mūsā came to him. The caliph began to ask him different questions taken out from the Coran, from the Torah, Gospels, history of the early prophets, institutions of earlier Apostles of God,— all the matters which he had just learnt from his teacher (the *dā'ī*), and (thus) from the Master of the latter, whose devotion he imposed upon himself, swearing obedience to his command. And when he (the caliph) found in 'Alī b. Mūsā no knowledge which he expected to find, he at once realised that the fame spread about him amongst the masses was futile, and felt opposed to recognising him as his spiritual master. He realised that the wisdom of God is hidden from the enemies of His religion, (even if ?) they are participating in the assemblies where the Guidance-giving Imams teach. It is stored in His Men until the time of their Manifestation comes. [89] This consideration has changed the caliph's intentions as to his ('Alī b. Mūsā's) affairs, because he saw that he was not in the possession of the required qualifications, and did not deserve the position which belongs to the real Imam. (He saw) that he would go the usual way of other opponents before him. He reflected on what he had already done to proclaim 'Alī b. Mūsā (as his heir apparent), and this appeared to him wrong. He was afraid that he had missed the real Imam who had the rights, and that he, 'Alī b. Mūsā, would oppress the real Men of God, demanding from them more submission than his own predecessors demanded, thus thwarting his efforts and labours, and making him res-

ponsible for this. Whereupon he executed 'Alī b. Mūsā ar-Riḍā, making his position known.[1]

Meanwhile he himself stuck to what was revealed to him by his teacher and spiritual guide, appreciating what knowledge he heard from him. He left the matter as it was, as the Imam was concealed from people until the proper time to reveal himself. And his organisation was spread, his knowledge preached, his *dā'īs* were working, his Divine signs were clear,[2] while his own person was out of the reach of all till the time of his manifestation, and the completion of the predestined term.

This is what happened between al-Ma'mūn and 'Alī b. Mūsā ar-Riḍā, and the reason of his execution.

A sect after his death recognised as the Imam his son Muḥammad b. 'Alī. His father, being summoned by al-Ma'mūn, had left him behind in Medina as a small child in his house. When he, 'Alī b. Mūsā, died, he left him only five years old. But all the Shi'ites believe that the (real) Imam never leaves this world without appointing as his successor his grown up son possessing all the rights to act as an *imām* (in communal prayers), and to receive his father's inheritance. As is known, a child of five to ten years of age, according to law, cannot issue orders, his witness cannot be accepted (in the court of law), and his judgement cannot be relied upon. Witness cannot be accepted from the man who cannot lead the communal prayer, who cannot be permitted to sacrifice animals. We have not seen any one amongst the ancient kings of Jews or Christians, or others, practicing such things, or accepting these (in principle). [90] You say that his father has

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[1] We have seen above (Texts, p. 82) that according to the author Imam Ja'far appointed the Abbasid al-Manṣūr as his "apparent" successor. Here the story reflects obvious sympathy with al-Ma'mūn, almost admitting the sincerity of his "conversion". The author even passes in silence over an important detail of the story: the treacherous al-Ma'mūn executed his "teacher", the Ismaili *dā'ī* (cf. above, p. 252). Such a sympathetic tone towards the Abbasids is indeed surprising in a work composed towards the end of the fourth/tenth c.

[2] Delete *min* (beg. of line 8). In another (modern) copy of this work the words *inna-hu* are omitted. It is quite possible that the scribe mistakenly repeated twice the ending of the preceding word, *awāni-hi.*

not appointed either a trustee or lieutenant in charge of him, while he was in the same position as Hārūn when he was about to die. The latter appointed Yūsha' b. an-Nūn to be in charge of his son. Or as did Ismā'īl b. Ibrāhīm, who appointed as a guardian of his son a certain dignitary called in the Coran al-Kabsh (sheep), as is revealed (XXXVII, 107): "And we ransomed him with a mighty victim" . . . (XXXVII, 112): "and we blessed him and Isaac". It is thus clear that the blessing first fell upon al-Kabsh, before being given to Isaac. As Ismā'īl nominated (according to what is revealed) al-Kabsh, a "sheep", so Mūsā (Moses) nominated *Baqara*, "bull" (or cow). When he collected his lieutenants after the death of his brother, he said to them (II, 63): "God bids you slaughter a cow (heifer)". In other words he said:— "The Imam, who is the lieutenant of God on the earth, orders you to appoint a *ḥujjat*, who would stand for your command, being in charge of your current affairs, until the time comes for the real Master to appear, manifesting his authority". Dost thou not see what the lieutenants of Moses replied (II, 63):— "Art thou making a jest of us?" i.e. are we to slaughter a cow, or you? This has already been explained above.[1]

And you say:— "Verily, he ('Alī b. Mūsā) appointed him (his son Muḥammad) before he left him behind on his departure". How could he have appointed as his executor a minor? Both we and you accept the belief that the appointment takes place by the order of God and His inspiration of the parent who appoints his son, as mentioned above, on the basis of reliable testimony. Is it possible to any one in ordinary life to appoint as his trustee his son while he is a minor? Or ought he not to appoint a trustee in charge of his son, and leave to him his property which he should return to the latter as testified by reliable witnesses in the court of law?

After this you became split into sects recognising his son and grandson, up to the birth of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan. He was a

[1] "Above", i.e. in the earlier part of the work which is not quoted or translated here.

Negro, but you have accepted his being an Imam, entertaining no doubts as to his being the Expected One [91] who should deliver you from the tyranny of the oppressors, the Head of religion and of the state. You even thought that the Prophet predicted his advent, narrating lengthy stories about this, which would be too long to mention here, and which will collapse on being analysed.

When he died, you accepted his son al-Ḥasan. A certain al-Jārūd b. Riyāḥ (who served two Imams, of theirs, 'Alī al-Aṣghar and his son al-Ḥasan) narrates miracles of this al-Ḥasan, of which the like were never worked. He said: "I was once going for a walk with him, he in front, and I with some friends walking behind him, and carrying on a conversation. And I said [to myself]:— "Wilt thou see that he knows what is in our thoughts, and of what we are talking?" Said a friend of mine:—"If he knows what we are discussing amongst us, let him move his cap (*qalansuwa*)". And after some time he did really move it, so that we said:— "Verily, he delayed this as a test for us!" Then he stretched out his hand as if to put it right. Did ever any one work a miracle like this, except for Jesus?"

There are many stories of this kind amongst you,— it would be too long to relate these. But, anyhow, this al-Ḥasan died and left no posterity. You insisted in your advice to him that he should increase the number of concubines; and he increased their number, so that God might give him a son. And he wished this very much, but he died. It is narrated that after him a party demanded that his property should be confiscated and handed over to the department of charities. But others insisted that one of his concubines, named Ṣaqīl, serving in the house, declared that she was pregnant.[1] They threatened her, and tempted her greed, and maintained that the "Expected One" was to be born of her. All this was a design invented in order to seize the property which ought to have gone to the poor. They

[1] According to the '*Umda*, 176, her name was Narjis.

which I have brought you, when you were immersed in the abject impiety during the period of idolatry. He (the promised Imam) shall be declared by you as wrong, as I was also declared, and oppressed as I was oppressed for my calling you to God. He shall be slandered as impious, just as I was slandered, and will be called pretender and sorcerer, just as I was called so. Just as the early ones were slandering, so shall do those in the future; and as the early ones have been proved to be liars, so shall be the future ones".

It is similarly narrated from Ja'far aṣ-Ṣādiq that he said: "Even if some one should come before you with the brains of this my son, do not doubt, nevertheless, that he is to be the Imam after me". And on another occasion he said, while he, Ismā'īl b. Ja'far, was present:—"He is the Imam after me, and what you learn from him is just the same as if you have learnt it from myself".

One of his (Ismā'īl's) associates relates that when Abū'l--Khaṭṭāb started his (heretical) preaching, he, the narrator, saw Ismā'īl as he was going out of his school. "I made him sit in my room, and kissed his head, [96] and said to him:— "Verily, I am surprised at what I see of your actions". And he asked: "What makes thee so surprised?" Said I: "Yesterday thy father said to us that Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb was the "mine of our secret knowledge", and a "kitbag of our wisdom". And to-day he curses him, ordering us to sever connections with him." Ismā'īl replied: "When God called the heavens and earth, saying (XLI, 10): "Come, ye two, whether ye will or no! They said:— we come willingly". Thus they manifested their obedience. Similarly the Prophets, the Trustees, and the Imams obeyed God, sincerely answering the call. For this reason they have become infallible (*ma'ṣūmūn*), and those who followed them became either *mustaqarr* (normally appointed), or *mustawda'* (temporarily entrusted with), because these were obedient (?), but not faultless. Abū'l--Khaṭṭāb is one of those to whom God entrusted our knowledge. This is why he preached affection to us (*walāyatu-nā*). But when

his faith had become erroneous, God seized from him what was entrusted with him, and we dissociated ourselves from him. Thus what strange things hast thou found in all this ?" And the child rose, and quickly left the room.

The man exclaimed: "How superior (in wisdom) are the young and the old Hashimites to us!" His friend, with whom he had this conversation, came to Ja'far aṣ-Ṣādiq, and informed him of what was said. The Imam asked: "And who is talking like this ?" — Then he summoned him (Ismā'īl ?), ordering him not to go again to the school. And he, the Imam, began to take great care as to what the people talk, fearing evil from the enemies of his son.

We and you both agree in accepting the tradition that when the son of the Imam (Ismā'īl, or his son ?) completed seven years of age, the Lord of religion at the time declared him (obviously *'arafa-hu*) the Master of religion and his heir apparent, as his next in descent. He guarded him from his other sons, kept him away from the contact with the public, and his education went on under his own supervision.[1]

As is stated by some saints, God never sends a prophet, or his trustee, or an Imam, without appointing to him a successor who succeeds him still in his lifetime, taking over the charge of the community after his death. [97] The Imam is thus one who preaches (*nāṭiq*), and his successor one who keeps silence (*ṣāmit*). This is neither denied by us, nor by you. The first who acted according to this principle was Abraham, when he was sent to his people, and was guided by the Divine help (*ta'yīd*). He was childless all his life, and God ordered to him to accept his nephew Lot as his "silent" (*ṣāmit*) successor, in order to strengthen his authority. So Lot was appointed, and people recognised him. This is an absolutely true story. And when Ismā'īl was born to him (Abraham), grew up, and reached a mature age, God ordered

[1] All this sounds very obscure. It is not clear to whom the story refers,— to Ismā'īl, or his son Muḥammad.

Abraham to appoint him as his *asās* (i.e. the founder of the line of the Imams). We have already narrated his story, and it is unnecessary to repeat it here.

When Abraham appointed his son Ismā'īl as his successor, he sent his nephew Lot to Syria, where he had to establish the "country of refuge" (*dār hijrat*) for him, and ordered him to preach in favour of Ismā'īl. As God says in His book (XXIX, 25): "and Lot was faithful to him. And Abraham said: I am emigrating to my Lord".

As Abraham treated his nephew Lot, so did Moses deal with Yūsha' b. an-Nūn, appointing him before he received orders from God to appoint his own brother Hārūn. And similarly did Muḥammad act with regard to Ubayy b. Ka'b.[1] We have dwelt on this matter sufficiently for those who understand. Similarly did Sulaymān act, when he wanted to make inquiries amongst his dignitaries. He summoned them to the town called Sabā, and said (XXVII, 38–40): "O ye chiefs! which of you will bring me her throne before they come to me resigned?" . . . "He who had the knowledge of the Book said: I will bring it to thee before thy glance can turn. And when he saw it settled beside him, he said: this is of my Lord's grace that He may try me whether I am grateful or ungrateful".

His father David acted similarly when he appointed him (Solomon), and presented him to his dignitaries, when he had acquired great authority over the people. [98] As God says (XXI, 78-9): "And David and Solomon, when they gave their judgment concerning the field, when some people's sheep had strayed therein, at night; and we testified to their judgment; and this we gave Solomon to understand". And prophets and Apostles of God, already mentioned above, also acted similarly before him.

[1] Very little is generally known about this associate of the Prophet except for his being one of those few who could read and write. A reference to him seems to be quite an exceptional event, and it would be very interesting to trace what the allusion really implies.

(Imam) Ja'far b. Muḥammad acted also in the same way. He for twenty-five years had no son except for Ismā'īl and his brother 'Abdu'l-lāh. He never took any other wife so long as their mother was alive, nor took any concubine. So he acted knowing that the Imamat had to be continued in his posterity. He persisted in this until she, his first wife, left this world. And just as Imam Ja'far, so did his ancestor the Prophet Muḥammad himself act with regard to Khadīja, and 'Alī with regard to Fāṭima, never marrying again so long as they were alive.

Stick,— may God pity you! — to arguments of this kind, and bring similar proofs and Divine signs concerning your own Imams, if you believe sincerely. When Ismā'īl died, those of the followers of Mūsā (b. Ja'far) claimed, proving the error of their belief, that he, Ismā'īl, appointed him, Mūsā, as his successor. They mentioned as a proof the actions of Muḥammad the Prophet when he appointed al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn (as Imams), saying: "Verily they are both Imams, "whether they stand or sit", i.e. whether they exercise their authority or not"; and, verily, the verse of *taṭhīr* in the Coran is (another) testimony to their cause. Both of them were present with the Apostle of God on the "night of imprecation". This is what the Apostle of God said to the Christians of Najrān (III, 54): "Come, let us call our sons and your sons, and our women and your women, and ourselves and yourselves (then we will imprecate and put God's curse on those who lie)".

And the testimony of the Prophet about them (i.e. Ḥasan and Ḥusayn) is what he said that they are "the lords of youths", and those who will enter Paradise. And also the preference which he gave to their father, adding: [99] "And their father is better than themselves". This is because the Trustee preceded them, and was entrusted with them, and the proof of his priority over them is this testimony (of the Prophet) which proves his position.

It is narrated that the Prophet of God died eleven years after the Hijra, on Monday, the second day of the month of

Rabī'u'l-awwal. Ḥasan was at the time eight years old, and Ḥusayn — seven. Thus they could not be qualified to be the Imams, and for this reason their father ('Alī b. Abī Ṭālib) was appointed as the trustee in charge of them, just as in the case of Yūsha' (b. an-Nūn), the trustee of the son of Hārūn. And when their father ('Alī) died by the command of God, he appointed first the elder in preference to the younger son, and the younger became the heir of all.

You assert that Mūsā was the trustee (*amīn*) to Ismā'īl. But when the latter died, his son Muḥammad was fourteen years old. Thus you have accepted this testimony, siding with those different sects which rose before you, in making the Command of God revocable. You thus disregard what the Apostle of God said (XLIII, 27): "And we have made a word to remain in our posterity". And just as the Imamat of Ismā'īl was handed over to him by the command of God and His inspiration of the one who preceded him, so also was it handed over to his son by the order of God and His inspiration,— [the inspiration for which he prayed],[1]— as is already narrated concerning how it happened in the past ages, and how the past prophets and Imams acted.

Both we and you admit the tradition that when Ismā'īl was about to die, he summoned his son and his followers, and handed over the Imamat to him (Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl), in their presence, under the supervision of his father (Imam Ja'far). He entrusted the testimony concerning the position of his son to one of his *ḥujjats* (i.e. *dā'īs*), as did his forefather Ismā'īl with regard to the person surnamed al-Kabsh (sheep), appointed before him.[2] He made him the "veil" for his heir, to distract towards him the attention of the tyrants of the time. And Imam Ja'far presided over the assembly, as Jacob presided over the assembly of

[1] The words in the square brackets are found in the old copy, but are absent in the modern MS.

[2] It is significant that the name of this *ḥujjat* is not disclosed. There is very little doubt as to all this being merely a "reconstruction" of the long forgotten events on the basis of the Biblical parallelism, and that it has nothing to do with the real facts.

Joseph when the latter was on his deathbed. We shall discuss this question [**100**] in its proper place, if we successfully carry on up to it.

Then came Muḥammad (b. Ismā'īl) by the command of God and His inspiration of him. His *dā'īs* dispersed, travelling in different provinces (*jazā'ir*), and ordering the local people to carry on the propaganda in his favour.[1] The world became alive with propaganda, and his influence spread. They started to look in their travels for the opportunity to establish the "country of refuge". But his enemies increased their effort in their search for him. And when his authority became stronger, and news about him spread far, when the search for him was intensified, he disappeared from his mother country, and went forth, passing through different lands. Imam Ja'far remained in his original place, entering into the cave of *taqiyya*, as his father called it,— this was mentioned above.[2]

His *dā'īs* spread to different places, and he appointed his lieutenant, the high priest, who was with him, as did the son (?) of Hārūn with regard to Yūsha' b. an-Nūn. This is why God says, referring to the Ephesian Sleepers (XVIII, 21): "They will say: three, and the fourth of them was their dog. And others will say: five, and the sixth of them was their dog,— guessing at the unseen. And some others will say: seven, and the eighth of them was their dog. Say: my Lord knows best the

[1] Such details of the organisation of the Ismaili propaganda obviously have nothing to do with the time of Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl, and really belong to the author's time. The reference is precious for the historian, because the author refers to this as to something well-known to every one. It obviously indicates the general policy of laying foundations to "cells" through agents sent from the centre, and mobilising local forces to spread the propaganda effort further.

[2] If this tradition has any historical substratum, it is very important. It makes Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl leave Medina *before* the death of his grandfather, Imam Ja'far, i.e. before 148/765. This seems to be more consistent with his story. Sayyid-nā Idrīs in his *'Uyūnu'l-akhbār* ("Ismailis and Qarmatians", pp. 60–63), makes him leave his native town after the death of Mūsā b. Ja'far (d. in 183/799), probably at the age of 63, which seems quite improbable. This later version is probably invented in order to make him connected with the picturesque names of Hārūnu'r-Rashīd and his wife Zubayda.

number of them; none knows them but a few. Dispute not therefore concerning them save with plain disputation".

On the Proofs of the Imamat of Ismā'īl and his Son.

From what we have seen concerning both of these Imams, they betook themselves to it (*dār hijrat* ?), with their followers (?),[1] leading them by the path which had never been trodden by any one except for the Imams, proceeding by the Command of God and His inspiration, and legitimate succession (*naṣṣ*), as has been explained above. They (the early Imams) made it unlawful for themselves to remain in the kingdom of their enemy, under the tyrannical authority, to live under their power, or have any connection with them, or show submission to them. Verily, none remained amongst the faithful (in such conditions), except the weak ones, whom God has excused from amongst men, women and children, who could not avoid this, and were not given a chance to attain this. The *dā'īs* of the Imams were working in disguise in [**101**] different provinces, calling people (to the right cause), and specially educating their neophytes. When any one was converted to their religion, and they were sure as to his sincerity in faith, they would accept his oath of secrecy, and reveal to him the knowledge about the Imam of the time, his place, name, and genealogy. Those of the converts who could do this, emigrated to him; those who for different reasons could not afford this were ordered to live in disguise and concealment of their religion, or to wander on earth until the time of the manifestation of the Imam should come.[2]

What also indicated the Imamat of Ismā'īl was the fact that, as we have seen, factions in Islam differed as to what had been handed down to us from the Apostle of God, with regard to the

[1] Apparently a portion of the sentence is omitted by an error, and this is why it is so difficult to trace the real relation of the pronominal suffixes. The word *rukūba-humā* seems to be an error. In the modern copy, instead of *ḥamalā* there is *ḥamalū*, and it is not clear, to whom it refers.

[2] All this is obviously not historical information, but theoretical ' reconstruction ".

plain doctrine, and some of them denied the existence of the inner sense (*bāṭin*) in his injunctions,— this was because they were simply incapable of understanding it. They related false tradition which they falsely attributed to the Apostle of God, or also related the things which he had really said, but of which they could not understand the allegorical significance (*ta'wīl*). They related in their tradition itself such things as that God said that He created Adam after His own likeness. Or the Prophet's words that he saw his Lord in the streets of Medina, as a handsome looking man with thick, hard, and curly hair. Or what Muqātil b. Sulaymān narrated from the Prophet that God consisted of flesh and blood, and had the appearance of a human being! Similar things were narrated also by those who were connected with the Shi'ites, relating different utterances of 'Alī, dwelling on their literal sense only: "I produced its streams, and made its fruits grow. I am the Master of the revealed mystery, the opener of the Revelation. I was with Mūsā and Hārūn". Listen to what they say! Have not we already explained to you that such things as these are merely a form of expression, and this always requires allegorical interpretation (*ta'wīl*), as every writing related to them requires this. Similarly all the expressions of prophets, *waṣīs* and the Imams require it. We have already composed a book, *faṣl*, teaching you the knowledge of the inner sense and its allegorical interpretation in such matters.[1] And if we refer with you to the *ta'wīl*, we find that you agree with the common people who [**102**] are deservedly regarded as blind . . .

Both we and you agree in believing that the Apostle of God said to 'Alī: "Thou wilt be fought on account of the *ta'wīl* of the religion (i.e. allegorical interpretation of religious beliefs), just as I have been fought on account of the *tanzīl* (revealed religious law)". Both of us agree in respect to the letter of this

[1] The author probably alludes to his *Kitābu'l-kashf* (cf. *Guide*, no. 50), or *Ta'wīlu'z-zakāt* (cf. *Guide*, no. 40). Note the use of the term *faṣl*, in the sense of "monograph", a work devoted to some particular question (not a general exposition of religion). This seems to be the earliest instance of such use (cf. *Guide*, p. 101, and *Kalāmi Pīr*, introduction, p. xxix).

expression (*ẓāhir*). But you are content with the letter only, taking only it into account, just as the Sunnis accepted the word of 'Umar, approving of it, and taking it as his great service (to Islam). But you and they have forgotten the word of God (VII, 51): "On the day when its interpretation (*ta'wīl*) shall come, those who forgot it before will say: "there did come to us the Apostles of our Lord in truth,— have we intercessors to intercede for us?" etc. You believe that all this is going to happen in the future, and that the revelation of its inner sense must be expected only then. But God said concerning this (LVII, 13): ". . . door within which shall be mercy, and the outside of it (*ẓāhiru-hu*), in front of it, there shall be torment". Such expressions, and similar to these, are too numerous to quote, and their explanation would carry us beyond the limits of this book.

What we have already cited as a proof of our thesis is sufficient for intelligent people, and those who are properly minded. What is in all these six institutions (*fuṣūl*) which are the pillars of Islam, such as the double testimony, prayer, *zakāt*, fast, *ḥajj*, and *jihād*,— their source is affection for the Prophet's house (*walāyat*). If we should demand from you that you should be content with their formal meaning (*ẓāhir*), in preference to their inner meaning (*bāṭin*), you would not discharge these duties as they should be in truth, as they should be according to their spiritual meaning (*ḥaqīqat*). Thus the rite of the ablution which God made obligatory to us, or these 17 *rik'ats* which are obligatory upon every one. Why does the *sunnat* of the Prophet precede *farīḍat*, and the extra devotion (*nāfilat*) follow it? Similarly, why does the noon prayer have a *sunnat* before it, and after it a *nāfilat*? But the afternoon prayer, which has a *sunnat* before it, has no *nāfilat* after it? And the evening prayer has a *nāfilat* after it, but no *sunnat* before it? Or the night prayer, which is the last, and there are prayers before [**103**] and after it? And the prayer at dawn which has a *sunnat* before it, but no *nāfilat* after it? You would be unable to explain the reason why this is so.

And also amongst those things which prove the Imamat of Ismā'īl (b. Ja'far) is the fact that when he (Ismā'īl) died, Ja'far aṣ-Ṣādiq let his body remain covered in his house for three days. His face was left uncovered, and the people who came in could recognise him,— the Hashimites and non-Hashimites, the residents of Madina, and the visitors from elsewhere. Imam Ja'far himself asked those who came to express their condolence to him:— "Is not this my son Ismā'īl?" And those who saw him had no choice but to admit this without hesitation. Then he took the signature of the visitor, as to what he had seen. He did this until in Medina all the Hashimites, local people and visitors, had given their signatures.[1]

The body was then taken out to the Baqī' cemetery, on the fourth day, still with the face exposed. From time to time the Imam (Ja'far) caused it to be laid on the ground, kissed it, and said: "By God, the death of Ismā'īl does not hurt me so much as what I have promised to him". He made the whole crowd which was with him to witness his burial, and even took signatures from those who were not present before the body was carried out. He did this three times, and on the fourth he had the body placed in the grave. He went through the ceremony in the usual way, and those present could give testimony of having seen him (Ismā'īl) buried in their presence.

The local spies wrote about all this to al-Manṣūr (the second Abbasid caliph (136–158/754–775)).[2] And Imam Ja'far also sent a letter to him, informing him of his bereavement. (Before that) the Abbasid sent spies to watch Imam Ja'far, in order to find out who was appointed as his successor, so that he might be murdered. When the news (about the appointment of Ismā'īl) came to him, he became worried. And they (the spies) were watching Ismā'īl,

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[1] All this is apparently paraphrased in the *Zahru'l-ma'ānī* by Sayyid-nā Idrīs, cf. above, pp. 209–213.

[2] If this tradition can be relied upon, it shows that the death of Ismā'īl b. Ja'far took place *after* 136/754. This tallies well with other references indicating that he was still living in 133/751 (cf. "Ismailis and Qarmatians", p. 57, and also above, p. 215).

plotting to seize him. Then came the news of his death, and the caliph was relieved from his anxiety. But only a few days passed before [**104**] he received a report that a man in Baṣra, a cripple of about sixty years, was sitting once at the door of his shop in the bazars of the town, plaiting a basket of palm leaves, when a young man passed by, in appearance and dress looking like Ismā'īl b. Ja'far. A crowd of men surrounded him, all greeting him, and asking for protection. When the cripple, who was a Shi'ite, a follower of Imam Ja'far, saw him, he began to shout: "O, descendant of the Apostle of God, stretch thy hand to me so that God may stretch His to thee!" The young man returned, seized his hand, and brought him down from his shop. Then the cripple walked along with him a distance, leaving him later, and returned to his place healthy and straight in stature. People began to crowd around him, asking him who it was who healed him. And he replied: "Ismā'īl b. Ja'far b. Muḥammad".

Thus the spies of the caliph wrote about Ismā'īl being dead, and also Ja'far aṣ-Ṣādiq wrote about his bereavement. And when the caliph read the latest news, he said: "Verily, the trickery of the sons of Abū Kabsha will never cease until they perish to the last man". Then he immediately summoned Imam Ja'far, who was brought before him. When he appeared before the caliph, the latter produced his own letter, and the report of the spies, and, showing to Imam Ja'far his own note, asked him: "Is not this in thy own handwriting, the letter informing me about Ismā'īl's death?" The Imam replied: "yes". Then the caliph produced the report of his spies about the events which took place in Basra. The Imam also produced the testimony of those who witnessed the death and the burial of his son. When the caliph saw these documents, his anger subsided. He then summoned a number of the Hashimites who were with him, and they testified what they had seen, and acknowledged their signatures. Thereafter he gave orders to dismiss Imam Ja'far, giving him good presents, and permitting him to return home.

This people did not know how the mystery of God acts in His saints; they did not know what God grants them in every period and time. Therefore aṣ-Ṣādiq returned to the sacred place of his Ancestor, and occupied his seat, just as Jacob sat in the place of Joseph after the latter's death, or as did Shu'ayb when he no longer had his prophetic mission to discharge. [105]

Travelling *dā'īs* scattered over the earth, while Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl was with him, keeping silent (*ṣāmit*) so long as his grandfather lived. But when his death approached, Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl left Medina, before Imam Ja'far died, collecting those of his dignitaries and "proofs" who still remained (in Medina). He went towards the *ḥujjat* whom he had sent to seek for him the "country of refuge", as it has been already mentioned in the account of his predecessors. As we have seen, he and his descendants and successors kept themselves concealed from people. They despatched their *dā'īs* to different parts of the world in search of the "country of refuge", as narrated above. One of the *dā'īs* appeared (later on) in the Yaman, starting propaganda there. His authority and position became strengthened. A teacher went by his orders to the Maghrib, about the date of the expiration of the period of *satr*, and the approach of the time of manifestation, promised by the Apostle of God, who predicted the "rise of the Sun from its setting place". When his authority had become strong, his propaganda met with complete success, and Divine signs appeared, his lords[1] came out towards him. This was similar to what Lot did for Abraham. When the latter left the country of his father, Lot acquired for him the "country of refuge". And he (Abraham) cancelled the law (*sharī'at*) of his ancestor, Noah. Similarly did Moses act, when he left the country of his father Shu'ayb, and cancelled the law of his ancestor Abraham. He then invaded the country of his enemy, and destroyed him. All this has already been narrated, and does not require lengthy repetition.

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[1] Obviously al-Mahdī and al-Qā'im.

And they, the Imams, always remained concealed until there came about what the Apostle of God had predicted to his community, when he was asked about the time of his death: "How long is the world to remain in existence?" He showed them his three fingers. They speculated as to whether this should be three days, months, years, tens of years, or three hundred years . . . , and added nine. Verily, the Prophet indicated this, and ordered this from the prophecy about the People of the Cave, to which they fled from the oppression of the tyrant. We have already explained [**106**] the words of the Apostle of God:— "They fled for the sake of their religion, and they will rise with Jesus son of Mary". And he also said: "My descendants amongst you are like a cave, the door of salvation for every one who enters it, or as the Ark of Noah for those who boarded it" . . .

. . . The end of the Book called "*Asrāru'n-nuṭaqā'*", by the Glory of God, and blessings to His Saint, and His blessing and protection,— may Peace from Him be on us!

6. From the 117-th *Majlis* from the "*Majālis*" of Sayyid-nā Ḥātim b. Ibrāhīm al-Ḥāmidī.

(For the work and its author see above, p. 23; and for the text see Extract 6.)

[107] Said ('Alī b. Abī Ṭālib): "I wish every one, at all times and periods of the world's existence, may know the truth". Thereupon rose Abū Dharr al-Ghiffārī, and said: "O, Commander of the Faithful! Reveal to us something about this, so that we may console ourselves with this, and live content with what is going on in this world".

And 'Alī said: "Know, o, Jundab,[1] that the Apostle of God has authorised me to mention to you the things that follow. He said to myself: "O, Abū'l-Ḥasan, when the daughter of the Kisrā (i.e. Persian king) Hurmuz shall be taken prisoner . . . verily this girl shall become the mother of Imams from my progeny. And it is unavoidable that, after thy death, another misfortune shall befall her, when, after the battle of Kerbela, she, and other members of the family, shall be badly treated by Ibn Marjāna, the accursed, after they shall have killed my (grand-) son al-Ḥusayn. His son 'Alī (Zaynu'l-'ābidīn) shall be saved. This shall happen 61 years after my "flight" (680 A.D.). And he (al-Ḥusayn) will entrust him (his son 'Alī) to Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya until his coming to age. He, 'Alī Zaynu'l-'ābidīn, shall marry Umm Sālim, the daughter of Khālid, and she will bear to him four sons. One of them (Zayd) will be killed and crucified in Kūfa, the second poisoned, the third shall be lost in

[1] In traditions of this mystical kind cases of similar "absentmindedness" are remarkably common,— the story begins in reference to some one, but further on a different person is addressed. This, most probably, is one of the proofs of the very unceremonious handling and adjustment of tradition by esoteric authors, who often combine different traditions into one, to suit their own purposes.

az-Zawrā' (i.e. Baghdad), and the fourth shall remain alive,—he shall be the Imam, Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn.

He will marry Umm Ja'far, who shall bear to him a son, Ja'far, in the town of al-Ba'd (?).[1] This shall happen in the year after my Hijra 124/742.[2] The Abbasids shall oppose him, but shall be unable to destroy him: God will not permit this to them. He shall marry Salmā,[3] (or: shall marry while remaining safe), and she shall bear to him five children; and he shall have five more [**108**] by concubines.

(6) The eldest of these[4] shall die in the lifetime of his father, appointing as his successor the *Seventh* Imam.

(7) The latter shall marry the daughter of his paternal uncle, and

(8) the *Eighth* Imam shall disappear in the year after my Hijra 134 (i.e. 751-2 A.D.). The Abbasids shall search for him, and he will betake himself from them to the remotest non-Arab country, where God will keep him safe from his enemies.

(9) He shall marry a woman, and she shall bear the *Ninth* Imam, whom the Abbasids shall also try to seize. He shall leave his original place, and settle in Syria,[5] within the province of Qinnasrīn, in the vicinity of Antioch, in the district of Ḥimṣ.[6] He shall settle there, in his house, and news about him shall spread everywhere. He shall send from there his *dā'īs* to the

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[1] Perhaps this simply means — in a remote city?

[2] Imam Ja'far's birth is usually placed in 80/699, approximately, indeed.

[3] Both Ismaili and Ithna-'ashari sources agree that the name of the first wife of Imam Ja'far was Fāṭima. According to the *Sharḥu'l-akhbār*, she was Fāṭima bint al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥusayn (or al-Ḥasan) b. 'Alī; and in the *'Umdatu'ṭ-ṭālib* (208), Fāṭimá bint al-Ḥusayn al-Athram b. al-Ḥasan b. 'Alī. It is indeed strange to see how such inconsistencies have been permitted to remain in those prophecies.

[4] Here obviously Ismā'īl b. Ja'far is intended. But, according to all sources, the eldest was 'Abdu'l-lāh, who, as we have seen, died a few months after the death of his father. Ismā'īl was most probably the second son.

[5] It is strange to read the term *Sūriyya* = Syria. It is in common use at present, but, as far as I can see, it is extremely rare in old works. Apparently here it is intended only as the name of a certain district of Syria.

[6] Salamiyya really lies about thirty miles from Ḥimṣ.

remotest places in the Yaman and the Maghrib. He shall marry there in the year after the Hijra 190 (i.e. 806 A.D.). The news about him shall spread, reaching also the Abbasids. They shall send their agents, and he shall fall into their hands, as a prisoner, who shall be brought to az-Zawrā' (Baghdad), their capital, in chains, suffering tortures and pain. And he, nevertheless, shall escape from the chains to his own place, after suffering death in appearance at the hand of the Abbasids.[1] The *Tenth* shall be born to him in the year after my Hijra 199 (i.e. 814-815 A.D.).[2]

(10) And when the *Tenth* from my descendants arises, he shall emigrate to the countries of the Maghrib, building there a town called after him. He shall meet many enemies amongst the population of the "Far West". And he shall be the "Sun rising from the place where it sets". He shall be the one by the hand of whom God shall conquer the Maghrib, and through him shall be exalted the one who would say: "I belong to my community and to the posterity of the Prophet". He shall marry a woman, and she will bear him (one son) only in the original residence, from which he shall start to his "country of refuge".[3]

(11) And she will bear to him the *Eleventh*, after a strenuous struggle, in which his parent shall become grey. [109] This shall take place exactly at the completion of three hundred years after my Hijra.[4] His authority shall be strong, although his assistants and helpers shall rise against him in arms, and shall besiege him in al-Mahdiyya. But he shall be appointed to his

[1] This is a very interesting allusion, although it is quite obscure. It may perhaps have a certain connection with the *Istitār*, 102. Cf. also above, p. 44.

[2] The "Tenth", i.e. Ḥusayn, the father of al-Mahdī, could not have been born in 199/814, if his son al-Mahdī was really born to him in about 260/873. Note that the next Imam is born in 300/912, i.e. 101 years later. This is only the usual complete disregard of commonsense and reality, so typical of esoteric works.

[3] All this obviously reflects the story of al-Mahdī; but perhaps there is the element of "duplication", between him and his uncle Sa'īd, which comes out more clearly in the later esoteric works.

[4] Cf. above, note 2. This is merely the usual effect of superstitious belief in the magic of numbers. The exact date of al-Qā'im's birth is not known, but he most probably was born soon after 280/893; cf. above, p. 32.

exalted office by a (special?) *naṣṣ*.[1] And he shall strike as a hammer, smiting the Maghrib as a millstone grinds (corn). This shall happen after his father shall have married him to the daughter of his uncle, his nearest relative and friend.[2]

(12) And she shall bear to him the *Twelfth*, and he shall see him when still living, just before his death (this apparently refers to the grandfather, not the father). He shall lose his mother in the lifetime of his father, growing under his supervision. His enemies shall be numerous, amongst his subjects and relatives. But, despite this, he shall grow in good health, and develop excellently; when he shall come of age, his father shall marry him to one of his slave girls, a Greek.

(13) She will bear to him the *Thirteenth*. This shall happen after his father (the 12th) shall become crook-backed, on account of the troubles which the people of the Maghrib shall give him, with his enemies, with numerous sad events, with little reliance on his subjects, with a great task, causing extreme fatigue, and taking long to accomplish, the rising of the Berbers, and the hostility of the population of Ifrīqiyya. He shall come to Tunis, and add to it the government of Fās (Fez), conquering Sijilmāsa, to the extreme limits of the Maghrib. And his death shall approach him after his being besieged in al-Mahdiyya. But he shall overcome his enemy, and forgive those who resisted him; these shall devour each other, on account of strong dissensions amongst them. Then shall come the time of his death.

(14) He shall leave as his successor the *Fourteenth*. This latter shall have several brothers who shall claim what God has given to him, each proclaiming himself the Imam at the time. But he shall overcome them, and firmly establish his authority, build a large army, and make public his aspirations. He shall

[1] There is a feeling of a certain deviation from the normal in this sentence, but it is impossible to grasp its real implications. Does it mean that his *naṣṣ* was of a kind different from that of other Imams?

[2] According to both the *Istitār* and the *Sīra* of Ja'far, the mother of al-Qā'im really was al-Mahdī's cousin, the daughter of his uncle, Muḥammad as-Sa'īd b. Aḥmad.

move his army, and his advanced units shall enter Egypt and its dependencies. He shall conquer Egypt with the help of his devoted slave,— and woe to the Syrian lands from this! Then he shall move from Ifrīqiyya to Egypt, ruining (on his way) some of the towns in Ifrīqiyya, to the confines of Barāwaṭa.[1]

(15) When he marries the daughter of his uncle, she shall bear to him two sons, one of them being his successor, the *Fifteenth*. [110] He shall also have two sons by his concubines, but the elder of these shall die (early). He (the 14th) shall establish himself firmly in Egypt, and when his death shall approach, and the time of passing away draw near, he shall leave it to the youngest of his sons. He shall appoint as the governor of his kingdom during the minority of his son one of his slaves, a common man (?). He shall begin to squander the money of the state everywhere, collecting the revenue on behalf of the one who has inherited the succession. But nobody shall be benefited except his dishonest slaves and concubines. And he shall not benefit anyone except for his slaves of lower standing. The 15th shall marry a woman who shall bear to him the *Sixteenth*,[2] about the time when his term has come to its end, his death approaches, and his reign is to expire, after (another?) slave girl of his, affectionate, and of good origin. So that when he shall say: "I begin to win", his death will come. He shall not live long after this.

(16) He shall leave in charge of his kingdom the *Sixteenth*, who shall be left a minor. Under him war shall start, and women shall make him the object of their intrigues. The Ṭāghūt (Devil) amongst these shall rise, making him and those with him the tool of intrigues, while he shall think himself that

[1] In these prophecies the circumstances of various events which took place in the reign of different Fatimid caliphs are often mixed up,— perhaps quite intentionally, to preserve the tone of "prediction", which would disappear if everything were perfectly accurate. Most probably the dates suffered most, as their value was less appreciated than that of other elements in those stories.

[2] The sixteenth Imam was al-Ḥākim, who was about twelve years old when he ascended the throne.

he has attained what he wanted, achieving his aims. But God shall extinguish the fire caused by his enemy, and counteract the evil done by him, destroying his army, and striking him suddenly. But in his stead shall rise another, the Black one, against the *Sixteenth* from my progeny. He shall be an affectionate friend to my descendant, while intriguing amongst his male and female slaves. He shall seize his kingdom from one end to the other, so that kings in the West and East shall think that he is going to take the position which belonged to His saints. But he, the *Sixteenth* (?), shall leap upon him as a fierce and enraged lion, and shall slay him, surprising the Egyptians with dismay. The inhabitants of the sacred cities shall be very much impressed by his being killed, and by receiving the news of his having been overcome by such a blow. The lad, my descendant, at the time shall not have reached the age of sixteen. But what difficulty shall that be to you, lad, when you oppose a eunuch![1] And woe to his descendants! When he (the *Sixteenth*) shall attain the age, [111] he shall choose an orphan girl, whom his father has brought up. This shall happen in the year after my Hijra 390 (i.e. 1000 A.D.). She shall be from a good stock. When he attains full age, he shall go to Damascus, where he shall appear in Rajab or Sha'bān of 394/May-June 1004.[2] His troops shall move there, and conquer Antioch, with other places on the frontier. He shall make Antioch[3] his "country of refuge".

Meanwhile the orphan girl, mentioned above, shall bear to him the *Seventeenth*. His name, o, Abū'l-Ḥasan, shall be like thine (i.e. 'Alī, as it really was in the case of aẓ-Ẓāhir, 411–427/1021–1036). Wars shall be started under his rule, and great

[1] All this obviously refers to the assassination of Barjawān in 390/1000. As is known, al-Ḥākim was born on the 23rd Rabī' I 375/13-8-985, and ascended the throne in 386/996.

[2] As is known, al-Ḥākim never travelled to Syria, and apparently never left Cairo.

[3] Antioch, as mentioned above, cf. p. 120 sq., often figures in esoteric speculations, as the stage of different mystical events. Al-Ḥākim, certainly, never went there, and had no reason to seek for any "country of refuge".

calamities shall happen,— it is difficult to describe what shall befall human beings and the Jinn. And how many intrigues there shall be, engineered by male and female slaves, and wives! But he shall not approach any one except her who shall give birth to his son, the *Seventeenth.* And there shall be much suffering, a difficult time, there shall be many tears, and much sorrow, grief, and strife. But how much humiliation there shall be to my young descendant when his army shall mutiny! He shall then go to Antioch, which shall become his "country of refuge". He shall permanently reside in the town of Rūm, on the confines of the Bosphorus, in the province of Constantinople.[1] Then the Christians shall fall out with him after the *Seventeenth* shall be born by that orphan girl.[2] His sons shall be numerous, and he shall have a large posterity before the proper time comes to have it (?), as many children shall be born to him while he himself shall still be very young, before his attaining majority.[3] Through his sons he shall start shedding the blood of the Christians, by murdering them and seizing booty from them, while he, the *Sixteenth* (here Seventeenth) himself shall be preoccupied with enjoying pleasures in numerous holidays, resembling the *Fifteenth* in his actions. The *Sixteenth* shall decide to slay his determinate enemy and avowed pretender, conquering ultimately his places of refuge and the towns occupied by him. Many women shall become widows, begging in the streets. **[112]** But (ultimately) different provinces shall flourish again, and merchants shall settle in them, protected by justice and law. And after this he shall be on the point of devastating Byzantium to the limits of Constantinople, when the Christians shall rise in rebellion, attacking him with great might, such that it would

[1] It is indeed interesting that Constantinople figures so often in prophecies ascribed to 'Alī. In some traditions some of the "concealed" Imams are made to reside there. None of the Fatimid caliphs, certainly, went there, or resided there.

[2] As is known, aẓ-Ẓāhir was born on the 10th of Ram. 395/20-6-1005.

[3] Only one son, in addition to aẓ-Ẓāhir, is known to history,— al-Ḥārith, born 19 Rab. II 400/10-12-1009. When he was born, al-Ḥākim was 25 years old,— not a minor, especially in the East.

justify the belief in the invasion of Gog and Magog. Then the *Sixteenth* shall disappear from the community in Byzantium (?). And how shall his troops and his generals fall into differences after his disappearance![1]

(17) Then his son, the *Seventeenth*, shall occupy his throne. The Christians shall collect in the vicinity of Constantinople, and move their troops. The people of the Maghrib shall then combine with the people of 'Irāq, helping the people of Syria. Egypt shall be ruined when they shall pass through it. People shall show the place on which the capital of Egypt stood, and Egyptian women shall be sold on the markets on Ma'rib (in the Yaman), while the people of the Maghrib shall offer for sale particularly delicate women, those who were brought up in seclusion, and slave girls (from rich houses); and one shall hear women's ornaments tinkling on common pack ponies. This shall happen despite their coming from the Maghrib to Baghdad to help my descendant. But Constantinople shall (nevertheless) be conquered, the Byzantines shall be defeated, the enemy shall be destroyed, and the people of God shall be victorious, because the people of God are always victorious, and their troops are Divinely helped. When my descendant conquers all the Byzantine provinces, seizing Constantinople, he shall return, and from Byzantium shall move against 'Irāq. This shall happen after the death of the *Sixteenth*. He shall go from Egypt to the land of the Kisrā (or the throne, *kursī*), of Peṭrus (?), whose place is in Syria (Shāmāt), at the time when seven planets come together in the beginning of the constellation of Spica Virginis. There shall be great calamities, deaths of many important men in the army and provincial government, but people will not pay much attention to this, being preoccupied with their own sufferings. This shall begin from the year (three hundred and) ninety-two to the end of

[1] This obviously refers to what was said above about his "residing in the country of Rūm", etc. But would it not also mean that he disappeared *into* Byzantium? Then all these details of his living in Constantinople, etc., would probably embody a belief in certain circles as to his having gone there *after* his mysterious disappearance.

400 (1002–1009 A.D.). This shall be hard, many [113] important and lesser men shall be slain, until my *Sixteenth* descendant shall have no more enemies to oppose him, neither from the members of his house and his relatives, nor amongst those unrelated to him, and his opponents. So it shall be by the time that the *Seventeenth* comes to the throne. This shall take place in Rajab or Sha'bān of that year (i.e. 400) — February–April 1010 A.D. Otherwise he shall ascend the throne some time after the year 400. But he shall come to it only after the execution of his enemies and foes from amongst his relatives and dependents.

Later on some people will begin to spread heretical beliefs concerning God. No sooner this will be started by one community than others, from another community will join this (?). Bad news shall begin to spread, and differences shall arise, amity shall become scarce in his affairs, and the affairs of his enemies. But in the propitious time and hour, after the destruction of the enemies of God, and the unbelievers amongst the people of West and East, this shall cease. They shall carry on war by sword and fire, since they will have no other choice." [1]

[1] As is already suggested above (cf. p. 117), apparently all similar esoteric prophecies are the product of the fourth/tenth and the beginning of the fifth/eleventh c. The most remarkable feature of this one is the extraordinarily pessimistic tone which pervades it. It strikingly contrasts with the tone of the earlier prophecies, collected by Qāḍī Nu'mān in his work, *Sharḥu'l-akhbār*, composed about 350/961 (cf. above, p. 99 sq.). It is more than probable that this is due to the great disappointment with the earlier expectations, which flooded the strictly religious Ismaili circles, when, after the reigns of the brilliant Imams from al-Mahdī to al-Mu'izz, there began a period of decay and political degeneration under weaker successors, accompanied by great calamities and suffering. Perhaps the wild experiments of al-Ḥākim were really intended to placate this section of his followers, and to raise their spirits by the enforcement of various restrictions upon non-Ismailis.

GENERAL INDEX

important:

Exceptions from the alphabetical arrangement of the entries:

Abū, b. (= bin), Ibn, *K.* (= *Kitāb*), *R.* (= *Risāla*), the Arabic definitive article *al-*, prepositions, and words within parentheses **are not taken into account** in the alphabetical arrangement of the entries in this index.

Figures:

plain figures refer to the English portion of the book, i.e. pp. 1–313.

figures in heavy type refer to the **Arabic texts** at the end of this book, pp. 1–113 (Arabic pagination).

figures in heavy type and in square parentheses refer to the pages of the *Istitāru'l-Imām* and *Sīrat Ja'far al-Ḥājib*, edited in the "Bulletin of the Faculty of Arts, Egyptian University", 1936 (1939), pp. 93–133.

the letter n, standing after a figure, e.g. 96n, indicates a reference to the **footnotes** on the page, 96. In case reference is given *both* to the *main* portion of the page *and* footnotes, a *comma* is inserted, e.g. 96,n, = 96, 96n.

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TEXTS

(Separate Arabic pagination.)

Note Errata on the Reverse.

ERRATA

Page 2, line last but one: last word = البلاء

— 3, last line: read صفراً

— 9, sixth line: read قتادة

— 20, third line: read المعز

— 22, third line from the bottom: read متوليًا for موليا

— 24, third line from the top: read و سنّه و أصله

— „ fifth „ „ „ „ „ قتادة

— 27, third line from the bottom: read المبين

— 30, top line: read نحو for نحق.

— 32, second line from the bottom: read يدعوا الى

— 40, third line from the top: read a *ḍamma* over قبض

— 51, sixth line from the top: read last word لينكّم

— 62, top line: read النور for نور

— 63, eighth line: cancel the reference to Cor. LXXII, 26.

— 79, tenth line: cancel (? اليه)

— „ last line: read إنّ for أنّ

— 88, second line: read يخشى for يحشى. and الزال for الزمان

— „ twelfth line: read و يبسط for يبسط

— 89, seventh line: put و انه into square brackets.

— „ eighth line: cancel the initial من

— 98, fifth line: read خمس for خمسة

—103, eleventh line: read خروجه

—109, fifth line: read عيش for عيشى

القتل فی الأکابر والأصاغر حتی لا یبقی لولدی السادس عشر ضدّ ولا ندّ، لا من الأهل والاقرباء ولا من الأقاصی والأعداء فی حین ظهور السابع عشر، وذلك أنّ أوّل ظهوره فی رجب وشعبان من هذه السنة، وإلّا فهو یظهر بعد ذلك الی حدود الأربع مائة، ولا یظهر إلّا بعد قتل الأضداد والأنداد من أقاربه واهله. وبعد أنْ یظنّوا بالله الظنون، وانّه لیس من أُمّة حتّی ظهر غیره من غیر أُمّة، وکثرت الأراجیف ووقع الاختلاف وقلّ الائتلاف فی امره وامر عدوّه، وذلك بعد أوان فی خیر عصر و زمان بعد هلاك الاضداد واهل الإنکار من اهل المغرب والمشرق، وضربوا بالسیف والنار لا یجدون الی الخروج من ذلك سبیلًا،

تمّ الکتاب بعون الملك الوهّاب علیٰ ید العبد الرّاجی الی رحمة الله الغفّار
الحاجّ محمّد حبیب الله ذکی "محبوب رقم"
فی یوم الجمعة ۲۱ من شهر ذی الحجّة الحرام سنة ۱۳۶۰ھ

PRINTED IN THE "AJMAL PRESS",
BOMBAY, 3.

الآفاق من سائر الاقطار وحدث فی ذلك التجار فی النواحی من العدل والانصاف،
وقد قرب من السادس عشر ما بعد ذلك بعد ان يهلك بلد الروم الی حدود
القسطنطينية، فعند ذلك تثور النصرانية وتغضب اكثر من غضبها حتّی
اذا فُتِحَتْ ياجوج وماجوج اقترب الوعد الحقّ، فيغيب السادس عشر من الأُمّة
فی بلد الروم، فيا اختلافَ الجيوش ويا اختلاف الأولياء لغيبته،

(۱۷) حتّی يجلس ولده السابع عشر فی مكانه، وقد اجتمعت النصرانية فی
نواحی القسطنطينيّة وتلتقی الجيوش ويسير أهل المغرب مع اهل العراق لاهل الشام،
وتُخْرب مِصْرحتّی اذا عبروا عليها يقال كان ها هُنا مدينة يقال لها مِصْر، ويُباع
نسآئُها فی سُوق مأْرِب حتّی يجلب أهل المغرب مِن رقيق النِسآءِ والمخدورات والاماءِ
حتّی يسمع حُلَى النِسآءِ على البراذين الشهب، وذلك فی وقت سَيْرهم من المغرب
الی نصرة وَلَدی فی بلد الزورآء، وتفتح القسطنطينيّة وتخرب روميّة ويهلك العدوّ
ويُغلب حزب الله إلّا أنَّ حزب الله هم الغالبون ولمنّ جند هم المنصورون، فاذا
افتح الی أقصى بلد روميّة وحرب قسطنطينية رجع ولدی فيسيْر من أرض روميّة
يطلب العراق، وذلك بعد صار السادس عشر من أرض مصر الی أرض كِسْرى بطرس
ومقامه فی الشامات عند اقتران الكواكب السبعة فی أوّل سنبلة، وعظمت المصائب
وقتل الاكابر من جند والقوّاد ويسهل على الناس من ذلك مَا جَرى عليهم من الفتنة،
واوّل ذلك من سنة اثنتی وتسعين الی رأس أربع مائة، عظم ذلك ويكثر

حتّى يحتوى على اليتيمة التى ربّاه أبوه ، وذلك من الهجرة فى ثلث مائة وتسعين سنة ، وهى من أولاد العَيْص ، فاذا بلغ اشدّه وسار الى دِمِشْق ويكون ظهوره فى رجب سنة أربع وتسعين وثلثمائة أَوْ فى شعبان من هذه السنة الهجرية فحينئذ تسيرُ جيوشه حتى يفتح أَنطاكيّة وسائر الثغور ويجعل أَنْطاكية دار هجرته ، ويولد هذه اليتيمة السابع عشر من هذه المدّة ، ويكون اسمه على اسمك يا ابا الحسن ، وقامت دونه الحروب وجلّت الخطوب وكلّت عن وصف ما لحقه الانس والجنّ ، فيا كثرةَ ما يصطنع من الإمآء والعبيد والنسآء ولا يقرب الا الذى (التى) اولدها السابع عشر ولا يكون ذلك الا من كربٍ طويلٍ وأمر جهيد من كثرة العبرة والإرجاف والفَجْعَة والإختلاف ، فَيَا لَهَا مِن بَليّةٍ وَيَا لَهَا مِن مَرْزِئَةٍ على وَلَدِى الأَصغر اذا حلّت بحلّة الجيوش ، وحصل فى أَنْطاكية وجُعِلَت دار هجرته ، واخلد بلد الروم الى حدود بلد الخليج مِن أرض القسطنطينية فعند ذلك تخضّب النصرانية مِن بعد يولد السابع عشر من هذه اليتيمة ، واولاده كثيرة وينسب قبل اوانه حتى اذا ولد له اولاد كثير فى أيّام صغر سنّه وقبل أن يراهق الكبر ، ويشتغل من أولاده بسفك دِمآءِ النصرانيّة والقتل الفَجْ ، وذلك أنّ السابع عشر فى رخآءٍ من العيش والسُرور وكثرة الحبور ويشاكل الخامس عشر فى أفعاله ، وذلك انّه قد احتَوَى على قتل المخالف الشقىّ والمنافق الدعىّ حتى اذا أفتح المعاقل والبلدان وعاست الارامل من النسوان وعمرت

عشر، ويولد من خواصّ إمآئه ذكرين ويموت أكبرهما، ويستقرّ في مصر ويحضر
وقت وفاته ويغيب ويليها من أولاده الأصغر، وقد كان استولى على ملكه في
اوّل وقته احد مماليكه من ولد العرض، ويمزق الاموال في اقطار ويطلب بذلك
من يوث الخلافة، فلا يرزق الآمن عانده من عبيده وامآئه ولا يرزق الخطوة
منه الّا اقلّ مماليكه، ويتزوّج امرأةً فيولدها السادس عشر عند نفاذ أمره وقرب
وفاته وانقطاع مدّته من بعد أَمَته الشفيقة التي من ولد العيص، حتّى اذا قال
قد ظفرت بالخطوة ظهر وقت وفاته، فلا يكون بعدها الا قليلاً،

(٤١) ويليها بعده السادس عشر وهو صغير السنّ، وقد قامت دونه
الحروب وهمّت به النسآء وقام طاغوتها بين يديه ويهمّ به وبمن معه حتّى
اذا ظنّ أنّه قد وصل الى بغيته وعزم على مراده اخمد الله ناره وشره واهلك
جنده وكبس ضدّه، وقام مقامه الاسود الثاني بين يدي السادس عشر من
ذُرّيتي، وهو على وَلَدي شفيقًا وبه رفيقًا بعد اصطناعه الإمآء والعبيد،
وأمسك المملكة باطرافها حتى يقول جميع الملوك في المشرق والمغرب أنّه
قد عزم مجلس في موضع أوليائه، ويثب عليه وثبةَ الاسد الأَزْوَر والضَيْغَم
القَسْوَر، فيقتله فُجاءَةً في اضطراب المصريّين، وينزل على أهل الحرمَين من
عظيم قتله ومداركة هَوْله، ولم يبلغ الصبي من ولدي غير ست عشرة سنةً
فَيَا تعبَ الصبيّ إذا أقبلَتَ الخَصِيَ، وَيَا وَيْلاً لِاَوْلادِ العيص منه، إذا بلغ عمره

وذلك فى تمام ثلث مائة من هجرتى، ويستقيم له الأمر ويثور عليه أنصاره ويحاربه أعوانه ويحصره فى المهدية، وينصّ عليه بالنصّ ويتجلله بالقهر فيطحن المغرب كطحن الرّحى، وذلك بعد أن يزوّجه أبوه ابنة عمه وأقرب الناس اليه،

(١٢) فيولدها الثانى عشر ويراه فى حياته وقبل وفاته، وتفقد أُمّه فى حيوة ابيه ويقوم له ويكون أعدائه كثيرة من أهله أقربائه ويسو فى احسن عيشى ويبلغ أحسن مبلغ حتّى اذا راهق البلوغ زوّجه ابوه احدى إمآئه من ولد الروم،

(١٣) ويولدها الثالث عشر ويقوم بعد مقاساته لأهل المغرب من الأضداد وكثرة الإرجاف وقلّة الائتلاف، والأمر العالى بعد التعب الشديد والأمر المديد وثورة البربر وعداوة اهل الإفريقية، ويأتى تونس ويليها الى حدود بلد فاس ويفتح سجلماسة الى أقصى المغرب، ويدنو وفاته بعد حصاره فى المهدية، ويقهر عدوّه ويعفو عن أضداده ويأكل بعضهم بعضًا من شدّة الخلف بينهم، ويدنو وقت نقلته،

(١٤) وقد خلف بعده الرابع عشر، وله إخوة يدعون ما منحه الله، وكل يدّعى أنّه صاحب الوقت، فيليها بعد ذلك ويستتمّ له الأمر ويكثر جنده وينكشف أمره ويجيش الجيوش ويسير المواكب الى أرض مصر وما يليها فيفتح مصر بالعبد الناصح فَيَا وَيْلًا هذا الشامات من ذلك، ويسير من إفريقية الى مصر ويخرب بلد إفريقية الى حدود براوطة،

(١٥) وبعد أن يتزوّج ابنة عمه ويولدها ذكرين احدهما الخامس

من إمائه خمسة ،

(٦) ويموت منهم الأكبر في حياته ويخلف الامام السابع،

(٧) فيتزوج ابنة عمه و (٨) يفقد الثامن في سنة مائة واربع وثلثين من هجرتي ويطلبه بنو العباس حتى يجد منهم الى اقصى بلد العجم ويسلمه الله منهم،

(٩) فيتزوج امرأةً ويولد التاسع، ويطلبه بنو العباس ويخرج من هنالك حتى يستقر في بلد الشام في اقليم سورية وجِنْد قِنَّسْرِين من ناحية أَنْطاكيّة وعمل حِمْص حتى تستقر هنالك داره ويعلو في الآفاق أخباره وتنفذ من هُنالك دعوته الى اقصى المغرب واليمن، فيتزوج هُنالك في سنة تسعين ومائة من هجرتي ويعلو خبره ويتصل ببني العباس ذلك ويوجهون اليه ويقع في أيديهم كالاسير في الاعتقال في الزَوْراء في دار مُلكهم فيالَهامن بَليّةٍ ويالَهامِن مَرْزِئةٍ ويخرج من الاعتقال الى مستقره بعد مَوت الطاهر من بني العبّاس، فيولد له العاشر في سنة مائة وتسع وتسعين من هجرتي،

(١٠) فإذا قام العاشر من ولدي هاجرًا الى أرض المغرب وبنى بها مدينةً تسمى باسمه، ويكون اضداده كثيرًا من اهل المغرب، وهو الشمس الطالعة من المغرب، وهو الذي يفتح الله على يديه المغرب وبه يعز من قال أنا من أُمّتي وعِتْرتي، ويتزوج امرأةً ولا يولد ها الا في المستقر الذي منه خرج الى دار هجرته،

(١١) فيولد ها الحادي عشر من بعد جهد جهيد الذي يشيب منه الوليد،

(٦) من المجلس السابع عشر والمائة من مجالس سيّدنا حاتم ابن ابراهيم الحامدى

قال (على ابن ابى طالب ع م) أرجوه حقًّا يعرفه كلّ من كان فى كلّ عصر وزمان وحين وأوان، فقام اليه ابوذرّ الغفّارى رح فقال يا اميرالمؤمنين أتْلُ علينا شيئًا من ذلك فإنّه مِمّا نتأسى به لترضى بما يجرى مِن هذه الدنيا،

فقال على ع م نعم اعلم يا جُندب أنّ رسول الله صلع أفضى الىّ بما أذكره لكم فى هذا الامر، قال لى يا ابا الحسن إنّك إذا أخذت ابنة كِسْرَى هُرْمُز ... فإنّ هذه الجارية تكون أُمّ الأئمة من عِتْرتى، ولا بُدّ أن يجرى عليها من بعد أُخْذِك لها فَجْعَةٌ أُخرى فى يوم كربلاء عند سَبْيِ ابن مَرْجانة لهم، لعنه الله، بعد قَتْلِه ولدى الحسين،

... ولِيسلّم ولده على (زين العابدين)، وذلك يؤرّخ بعد هجرتى باحدى وستّين سنة، ويكفله محمد ابن الحَنفيّة الى وقت بلاغه، فيتزوّج بام سالم بنت خالد فيولدها أربعة أولاد احدهم (زيد) يُقتَل ويُصْلَب فى الكوفة والآخر يسقى سمًّا والثالث يُفقَد فى بلد الزوراء والرابع باقٍ وهو الامام محمد ابن على ابن الحسين، فيتزوّج أُمّ جعفر فيولدها جعفر فى بلد البعد، وذلك من هجرتى فى سنة مائة وأربع وعشرين، ويقوم عليه بنو العبّاس فلا يقدرون عليه ولا يمكنهم الله منه، فيتزوج سالمًا (سلمى؟) فيولدها خمسة، ويولد

القول به قول رسول الله الفارّون بدينهم ويحشرون مع عيسى ابن مريم ، وقوله أهل بيتي فيكم كالكهف وباب حِطّة لمن دخله ، وكسفينة نوح لمن ركبها الخ

... تمّ كتاب اسرار النطقاء بحمد الله ومنّة وليه وحسن نظره وسلامه علينا ،

وإنّه فرّق الدعاة السيارة فى الأرض ومحمد بن اسماعيل بين يديه صامتًا مدّة حياته ، وانّه لمّا حضرته النقلة خرج محمد عن مدينة قبل موته وجمع مَن بَقِى من نقبائه وحُجَجِه ، وسار نحو حجّته الذى أساره ليطلب له دار هجرة كما تقدم القول فى نظرائه ، وقد رَأَيْنا هو وولده من بعده يستروا أنفسهم عن الخلق ، وبثّوا دعاتهم فى سائر اقاليم الارض لطلب دار هجرة الذى تقدّم بها القول حتّى يظهر بعض دُعاته اليَمَن وأقام الدعوة بها ، وقوّيت يدُه وعلا أمره ، وسار المعلم مِن تحت يده الى المغرب عند وقت الكمال وأوان الظهور وتمام وَعْد رسول الله صلعم بطلوع الشمس من مغربها ، وإنّه لمّا قوى أمره وكملت دعوته وظهرت آياته وكانت مواليه بالسير اليه كما فعل لوط بابراهيم أنّه لمّا سافر مِن دار ابيه نصب لنفسه دار هجرة ونسخ لشريعة ابيه ابراهيم ، وسافر الى دار ضدّه واهلكهم ، وقد تقدّم من هذا ما يَغْنِينا عن التطويل فيه والاعادة له ،

وانّهم لم يزالوا مستورين فى كهفهم حتّى تمّ ما حدّه رسول الله صلعم لأُمّته عند ما سألوه عند وفاته كم بقى من عمر الدنيا فأشار بثلث اصابعه فحسبوا ثلثة أيام وثلثة اشهر وثلث سنين وثلثين سنة وثلثمائة سنة وازدادوا تسعًا ، وان الرسول صلعم الى مثل هذا أشار ولمثل هذا نصّ عليه من نباء اهل الكهف حيث فرّوا من جور الظلمة ، وقد تقدّم

يحكى له أنّ رجلاً كان بالبَصْرَة زمِنًا له ستّين سنةً وأنّه كان قاعدًا على باب دكانه يعمل الخُوص وانّه مرّبه شابّ من وصفه وصفته والناس يهرعون حوله ويسمّونه ويكنفونه ، وأنّ الزّمِن لما مرّبه وكان يتشيّع لأبيه ناداه يا ابنَ رسول الله خُذ بيدى أخذ الله بيدك ، فرجع يأخذ بيده وانزله من دكانه ثم ساربه ساعةً وخلاه فرجع الى موضعه صحيحًا سويًا ، فاجتمع اليه الناس وقيل من مرّبك ، قال اسماعيل بن جعفر ابن محمد صلوات الله عليهم ،

فكتب أصحاب الاخبار موته ووصل كتاب الصادق بالتعزية فيه ، ثم قرأها وقال إنّه لا يزول يحرى بنى ابى كبشة مهمًّا حتى يفنوا عن آخرهم ، ثم إنّه ارسل لوقته الى الصادق فأشخصه الى حضرته ، فلما مثل بين يديه أخرج اليه كتابه وكتاب أصحاب الأخبار بموته وتعزيته وقال له أليس هذا خطّ يدك تعزيتى فى اسماعيل ، قال نعم فعند اقراره اخرج اليه كتاب اصحاب الاخبار بما كان من قصّته بالبصرة ، فعند ذلك أخرج الصادق عليه السلام المحضر الذى حضره بموته ودفنه فلمّا رآه ووقف على ما فيه من الشهود سكن ما به من الغضب ، فأحضر جماعةً من بنى هاشم كانوا عنده فشهد وابما راوه وثبّتوا على خطوطهم ، فعند ذلك امر بنزل الصادق واكرامه وردّه الى موضعه ، والخلق لا يعلمون سرّ الله كيف يجرى فى اوليائه ولاما منحهم به فى كلّ عصر وزمان ، ورجع الصادق الى حرم جدّه وجلس مجلسه كما جلس يعقوب فى مجلس يوسف بعده وشعيب لما انقطع التأييد عنه ،

وبعدها صلوة، وصلوة الفجر الذى قبلها سنّة وليس بعدها نافلة لعجز تم عن هذا كله،

وممّا يدلّ على امامة اسماعيل ايضًا صلوات الله عليه أنّ الصادق صلوات الله عليهما لمّا قُبِضَ أقامه فى مجلسه مسجّى ثلثة ايام وهو مكشوف الوجه والناس يدخلون اليه فيعرفونه من بنى هاشم وغيرهم وسائر اهل المدينة والزوار إنّه يقول لمن دخل اليه وعزاه فيه أليس هذا ولدى اسماعيل، ولا يستدلّ المسئول من قول نعم عند ما رأى ما رآه، فعند ذلك يأخذ خطّه فى محضر حضره وانّه لم يزل على ذلك حتى أخذ خطوط كلّ من فى المدينة من بنى هاشم وغيرهم من الزّوار واهل المدينة، وانّه خرج به فى اليوم الرابع الى البقيع وهو مكشوف الوجه، وانّه كان يُنزِله ويُقبّله ويقول والله ما أسفى علىّ موت اسماعيل أسفى علىّ ما اودعته اياه، ويشاهد جماعة مَن معه ويأخذ بذلك خط مَن لم يحضره من قبل حرويه، وانّه لم يزل على ذلك مرارًا ثلثةً، ومع الرابعة انزله على قبره، وفعل به مثل ما فعله فى غيره وأشهد الخلق بذلك، ودفنه بمحضر منهم وكتب أصحاب الاخبار بذلك الى المنصور ضدّه وكتب ايضًا الصادق اليه يعزيه فيه، وكان قد جعل عيونًا على الصادق حتى يعرف الى من يسلّم الأمر اليه فيقتله، وانّه لمّا وصلت الاخبار اليه اضطرب، وهم بالتوجه اليه فى طلبه حتّى أتاه مَوْته فسكن ما كان يجده منها، ثم انّه لم يحرّله إلّا أيامًا حتى

قُطِعَ لهم اسم من العُمَى ...،

وقد اتّفقنا نحن وانتم أنّ رسول الله صلعم قال لعلىّ صلوات الله عليهما سَوْفَ تُقَاتِلُ عَلَى تَأويله كما قَاتَلْتُ على تنزيله، واتّفقنا على ظاهره وأقمتم أنتم على ظاهره منتظرين له كما أقام العامّة على قول عمر واستحسنوه وجعلوه فضيلةً له، ونَسَيْتُم أنتم وهم قول الله جلّ وعزّ يوم ياتى تأويله يقول الذين نَسُوه من قبل لَقَدْ جَاءَتْ رُسُلُ رَبِّنَا بِالْحَقِّ الآية، وأنتم تعلمون أنّ هذا كلّه فعل مستقبل VII,41 وأنّ تأويله يُنتظر، وقول الله عزّ وجلّ فيه بَابٌ بَاطِنُهُ فِيهِ الرَّحْمَةُ وَظَاهِرُهُ مِنْ قِبَلِهِ الْعَذَابُ، وهذا وأشباهه ممّا لو تقضيناه لَطال به الشرح عن حدّ LVII,13 هذا الكتاب،

وفيما استشهدنا به كفايةٌ لاولى الالباب ومن وفق للصواب، وممّا جاء أيضًا فى هذه الستة الفصول التى هى دعائم الاسلام مثل الشهادتين والصلوة والزكوة والصوم والحجّ والجهاد، وانّ منابعها الوَلاية، وانّا لو طالبناكم باقامة ظاهرها فضلاً عن باطنها ما أدّيتموها على حقّها فضلاً عن حقيقتها مثل آداب الوضوء وما افترضه الله فيه على خلقه، وهذه السبعة عشر ركعةً التى افترضها الله علينا، وما سنّة الرسول قبل الفريضة ونفلة بعده، ومثل صلوة الظهر الذى قبلها سنّة وبعدها نافلة، وصلوة العصر التى قبلها سنّة، وليس بعدها نافلة، ومثل صلوة المغرب الذى بعدها نافلة، وليس قبلها سنّة، ومثل صلوة العشاء الآخرة ثمّ صار قبلها

سائر البلدان يدعون الناس ويخلصون للمستجيبين اليه، وان كلّ من اجاب دعوتهم وثقوا به يانته أخذوا عليه الميثاق وأعلموا بامام زمانه وموضعه واسمه ونسبه، فرحل اليه من استطاع منهم وأمروا من لم يستطع بالستر والكتمان والسياحة فى الارض الى أوان الظهور،

ومما يدلّ على امامة اسماعيل ايضاً أنّا رأينا جماعة الأمّة مختلفين فيما أدا الينا من رسول الله صلعم فى ظاهر أمره فيهم منكرين لباطنهم وذلك لمّا لم يبلغه عقولهم، وإنّهم يروون اخباراً كاذبةً ويسندونها الى رسول الله صلعم ويروون ايضاً أشياءَ قد قالها ولا يعرفون تأويلها، فيقولون فى ذلك فى نفس الخبر مثل قول الله عزّ وجلّ أنّ الله خلق آدم على صورته، وقوله رأيت ربّى فى أزقّة المدينة بوفرة جعد اقطط وهو شاب مقبول الشباب، وما رواه مقاتل ابن سليمان عنه أنّه لحمٌ ودمٌ وأنّه صورة كصورتهم، ومثل ذلك ما رواه المنسوبون الى التشيّع عن علىّ صلوات الله عليه وآله، وما قاله فى ظاهر كلامه، أنا فجّرت أنهارها، وأنا اسفت أثمارها، وأنا صاحب نوح وأنا فاتح الفتوح وأنا كنتُ مع موسى وهرون، اسمع كلامهم، أليس قد واقفنا كم على ظواهر هذه الأشياء كلّها انّما كان ظاهر ألفاظهم صلوات الله عليهم يحتاج الى تأويل كما أنّ الكتاب المقرون بهم يحتاج الى تأويل، كذلك قول الانبياء والأوصياء والائمة يحتاج الى تأويل يقوم به، فصار لنا الفصل فى علمكم بمعرفة باطنها وتأويلها، وانّا اذا رجعنا معكم الى التاويل وجدنا كم متفقين مع العامّة الذين

يأتى فى موضعه اذا انتهينا اليه ،

فقام محمد بأمر الله ووحيه اليه ، وفرق دُعاته السيارة فى جزائر الأرض ، وأمر اهل الجزائر باقامة الدعوة باسمه فعمرت الأرض وانتشر الأمر ، واقبلوا فى السياحة لنصب دار هجرة ، واشتدّ طلب الظّالمين عليه ، ولما اشتدّ أمره وقوى خبره ولما كثر الطلب عليه غاب شخصه عن دار ابيه وخرج سائحاً فى البلاد ، وبقى الصادق فى داره وقراره ودخل كهف التقية كما قال ابوه فى متقدم القول

وفرق دعاته واقام الخليفة المتقدم بين يديه كما فعل ولد هرون بيوشع ولذلك يقول الله عزّ وجلّ ، سَيَقُولُونَ ثَلَاثَةٌ رَابِعُهُمْ كَلْبُهُمْ وَيَقُولُونَ خَمْسَةٌ سَادِسُهُمْ كَلْبُهُمْ رَجْمًا بِالْغَيْبِ وَيَقُولُونَ سَبْعَةٌ وَثَامِنُهُمْ كَلْبُهُمْ قُلْ رَبِّي أَعْلَمُ بِعِدَّتِهِمْ مَا يَعْلَمُهُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ فَلَا تُمَارِ فِيهِمْ إِلَّا مِرَاءً ظَاهِرًا ، XVIII, 21

وممّا يدلّ على امامة اسماعيل وولده صلوات الله عليهما ، ممّا رأيناها حملا انفسهما عليه وركوبهما وسلكاهم طريقةً لم يسلكها الّا الائمة المتقدمون بأمر الله ووحيه والنصّ المتقدم ذكره ، وحرموا على أنفسهم المقام فى دار الضدّ ومع سلطان جابر والمعيشة تحت أكنافهم والانقياد لهم والخضوع اليهم ، وانّه لم يبق منهم الّا من عذره الله من المستضعفين من الرجال والنساء والولدان الذين لا يستطيعون حيلةً ولا يهتدون سبيلاً ، وسارت دعاتهم مستورين فى

وابوهما خَيْرٌ منهما، فذلك تقدّمهما الوصى وصار وصيًّا عليهما واولى بتقدُّمه عليهما لهذه الشهادة التى تقدمت له،

وقد جاء فى الرواية أنّ رسول الله صلعم توفّى فى إحدى عشرة سنةً من هجرته فى يوم الاثنين ليلتين خلتا من شهر ربيع الاول، وكان الحسن ابن ثمانى سنين والحسين ابن سبع سنين، وإنّهما ما استحقّا الامامة، ولذلك صار ابوهما وصيّا عليهما كما كان يوشع وصى ولد هرون، وأنّ اباهما لمّا حَضَرَه أمر الله قدّم الأكبر على الأصغر وصار الاصغر وارث الكلّ،

وشهدتم بانّ موسى كان الامين على اسماعيل، وقد مات اسماعيل وولده محمد اربع عشرة سنةً، فلحقتم بهذه الشهادة مَن مضى قبلكم من الفرقة المختلفة فردّدتم الأمر القهقرى، وتركتم ما قال رسول الله صلعم، وَجَعَلَهَا XLIII, 27 كَلِمَةً بَاقِيَةً فِى عَقِبِهِ، وكما كانت امامة اسماعيل بأمر الله ووَحْيه إلى من سلّم اليه كذلك كان تسليمه الى ولده بأمر الله ووحيه [وحيًّا طلبه] كما تقدّم القول فى القُرون الخالية، وما فعلته النُطقاء والائمة صلوات الله عليهم اجمعين،

وقد روينا نحن وأنتم أنّه لما غاب اسماعيل احضر ولده وجماعة صحبه وسلّم اليه بمحضر منهم فى مجلس ابيه، واستودع منزلة حجّته كما فعل ابوه اسماعيل بالكبش المنصوب بين يديه قبله، وجعله سترًا عليه من فرعون وقته ليجلس الصادق مجلسه كما جلس يعقوب مجلس يوسف عند غيبته، ولهذا جواب

بقوله، وَدَاوُدَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ إِذْ يَحْكُمَانِ فِي الْحَرْثِ إِذْ نَفَشَتْ فِيهِ غَنَمُ الْقَوْمِ وَكُنَّا لِحُكْمِهِمْ شَاهِدِينَ فَفَهَّمْنَاهَا سُلَيْمَانَ، وكما فعل قبله XXI,78-9 الانبياء والرسل ومن تقدم القول به،

كذلك فعل سيدنا جعفر بن محمد صلوات الله عليه، وإنّه بقى خمسة وعشرين سنة لم يُرزق ولدًا غير اسماعيل واخيه عبد الله، وإنّه لم يتزوّج على أُمّهما امرأةً ولم يتسرّ عليها جاريةً حتّى غابت، وذلك لما علم أنّ الامامة فى عقبه وأنّه أقام على ذلك حتّى غابت عن الدّار، وكما فعل الصادق كذلك فعل جدّه محمد بخديجة وعلىّ بفاطمة صلوات الله عليهم اجمعين، وانّهما لم يتزوّجا عليهما حتّى غابتا عن الدار،

فارجعوا رحمكم الله الى مثل هذه الحُجَج والبراهين، وأرونا مثلها فى أئمتكم إن كنتم صادقين، ثم إنّه لمّا غاب اسماعيل ادّعا من ادّعا من ذوى موسى بسوء عقيدته أنّ اسماعيل استخلفه فأورد بذلك شاهدًا يأخذ به كما فعل محمد صلى الله عليه وعلى آله لما نصب الحسن والحسين وقال إنّهما امامان قاما أوْ قعدا ولمنّ آية التطهير شهدت لهما، وإنهما حضرا مع رسول الله فى ليلة المباهلة، وما قال رسول الله صلعم لنصارى نَجْرَان، تَعَالَوْا نَدْعُ أَبْنَاءَنَا وَأَبْنَاءَكُمْ وَنِسَاءَنَا وَنِسَاءَكُمْ وَأَنْفُسَنَا وَأَنْفُسَكُمْ الآية، وشهادة III,54 الرسول لهما أنّهما سيّدا شباب أهل الجنّة، وتقديم ابيهما عليهما بقوله

والامام ناطق والخليفة صامت، وهذا مِمّا لا ينكره نحن ولا أنتم، وأنّ اوّل من فعل ذلك ابراهيم وأنّه لمّا بعث به الى خلقه وطرقه التأييد واقام بوهنة من عمره ولم يرزق ولدًا فأمره الله أن اتخذ ابن اخيه لوطًا صامتًا ليقوى امره، ويقوم بين يديه فنصبه ورآه الناس، وهذه الاخبار الصادقة، ثم انّه لما رزق اسماعيل وكبر الى ان بلغ اشدّه وكمل أمُوُه أمَرَه الله بنصبه اساسًا، وقد تقدّم من القول فيه ما يكفينا عن اعادته،

وانّه لما أن نصبه ارسل ابن اخيه لوطًا الى الشام يطلب له دار هجرة وامره بالدعوة الى اسماعيل، ومن ذلك حكاه الله جلّ وعزّ عنه بقوله فَآمَنَ لَهُ لُوطٌ وَقَالَ إِنِّي مُهَاجِرٌ إِلَى رَبِّي،

وكما فعل ابراهيم بابن اخيه لوط كذلك فعل موسى بيوشع بن النون اذ نصبه بين يدَيه قبل تأييده باخيه هرون، وكذلك فعل محمد صلعم بأُبي ابن كعب، وقد تقدم من ذلك ما فيه كفاية لِأُولي الألباب، وكذلك فعل سليمان لمّا أراد استخبار نقبائه فجمعهم في قصبة سبا، وقال لهم أَيُّكُمْ يَأْتِينِي بِعَرْشِهَا قَبْلَ أَنْ يَأْتُونِي مُسْلِمِينَ، وقول الَّذِي عِنْدَهُ عِلْمٌ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ، أَنَا آتِيكَ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَرْتَدَّ إِلَيْكَ طَرْفُكَ، فَلَمَّا رَآهُ مُسْتَقِرًّا عِنْدَهُ قَالَ هَٰذَا مِنْ فَضْلِ رَبِّي لِيَبْلُوَنِي أَأَشْكُرُ أَمْ أَكْفُرُ الآية، وكذلك فعل ابوه داوُد لمّا نصبه بين يديه وقدّمه على نقبائه، وانه لما كان يحكم في الناس بحضرتهم وهو ما حكاه الله عنه

وقلتُ ما أعجب بأمركم وأيت منكم، فقال بأىّ الأمور أنت تعجب يا فلان، فقلتُ يقول لنا ابوك بالأمس ابو الخطّاب معدن سرّنا. وعيبة علمنا، واليوم يلعنه ويأمرنا بالبرأة منه، فقال يا فلان وسمّاه إنّ الله جلّ وعزّ لمّا دعى السموات والأرض وذلك قوله ائتِيا طَوْعًا اَوْ كَرْهًا، قَالَتَا أَتَيْنَا طَائِعِينَ، فكانتا مطيعتان XLI.10 وكذلك النُطقاء والأوصياء والائمة كانوا مطيعين فى اجابتهم، فلذلك صاروا معصومين وسائر الأتباع لهم مستقرّ ومستَوْدَع لأنهم مجتابين (؟) وليسوا معصومين، وإنّ ابا الخطاب مِمّن استودعه الله علمنا، فلذلك قال بولايتنا فلمّا أفسد فى دينه قبض الله وديعته فتبرّأنا منه فمن أىّ هذه الامور أنت تعجب، ونهض الصبى مِن حِجره مسرعًا،

فقال الرجل مالى ولصغير بنى هاشم وكبيرهم، ودخل الرجل لوقته الى الصادق فاخبره بماجرى بينه وبينه، فقال (من) يتكلم بمثل هذا، ثم أحضره وأمره بِأَنْ لايعود الى الكُتّاب وصار يصونه من كلام الناس خوفًا عليه من ضدّه،

وقد روينا وروّيتم أنّه اذا تمّ لولد الامام سبع سنين عرف صاحب الوقت صاحب الأمر والوارث له مِن ولده فيَصونه عن سائر ولده ويُنزّهه عن مخاطبة الناس وتربيته اليه،

وممّا جاء عن بعض الأولياء أنّ الله جلّ وعزّ لم يبعث نبيًا ولاوصيًّا ولا امامًا وهو ينصب له خليفةً يخلفه فى حياته، ويقوم بأمر الأُمة بعد وفاته،

رجعتم بالأمر الى جعفر عليه السلام، والأمر لا يرجع الى القهقرى فَمنعتم
مَسَاجِدَ ٱللَّهِ أَن يُذْكَرَ فِيهَا ٱسْمُهُ وَسَعَيْتُمْ فِي خَرَابِهَا، فصرتم كما قال الله جلّ وعزّ
II, 108 مَا كَانَ لَهُمْ أَن يَدْخُلُوهَا إِلَّا خَائِفِينَ، لَهُمْ فِي ٱلدُّنْيَا خِزْيٌ الآية، ولم يكن الله
عزّ وجلّ لمّا قلّد اسماعيل بخلافته لم يعلم أنّه يموت حتّى قلتم أنه بدأله فيه،
نسيتم قول الصادق عليه السلام أنّ البدء والمشئة لله الى كلّ شئ إلّا فى الامامة،
وقول رسول الله صلعم اسمه اسمى واسم ابيه اسم ابى، وفى رواية اخرى أخبرنى
حبيبى جبرئيل عن ربّ العالمين أنّ رجل من ظُهرى يخرج فى آخر الزمان، اسمه
كاسمى واسم ابيه اسم ابى، يدعوا الناس الى دين الله الأزهر عند ارتدادهم
دين الله واندراس الاسلام والشريعة، وذلك الاختلاف ضلالهم فيُخرجهم
من ضلال الفتنة وكثرة الاختلاف والشبهة كما أَخرجتكم أنا من ضلال الشرك
فى الجاهلية، ويكذّب كما كُذِبْتُ ويُؤذى كما أوذِيتُ فى الدعوة الى الله، ويقذف
بالكفر كما قذفتُ، ويسمى كذّاباً وساحراً كما سُمِّيتُ، وكما كان الكذب فى الاولين
كذلك يكون فى الآخرين وكما كان التكذيب فى الاولين كذلك يكون فى الآخرين،

مع ما روى عن الصادق عم لو جائكم احد بدماغ ابنى هذا فى صورة فلا
تشكّوا أنّه الامام بعدى، وقوله وهو بين يديه هذا هو الامام بعدى فما أخذتموه
عنه فهو عنى، وقد جاء عن بعض أصحابه وكان من دعوة ابى الخطاب أنّه قال،
رأيت اسماعيل عند منصرفه من الكُتّاب فأجلسته فى حجرى وقبلت رأسه

آياته وبراهينه يتلوا بعضها بعضاً أظهرتم العداوة والبغضاء، وقلتم لن يبعث الله بعد محمد رسولاً وهو يقول أنّ ربّي وعدني بطلوع الشمس من مغربها والمراد الائمة في باطنها، ولمّا أصبح النهار وبان الضياء صرتم تنتظرون (مثل) العامّة الذين قطع لهم اسم من العمى بأنّ الفلك ينقلب على عقبيه، وما تعلمون أنّ الشمس التي تروون أنّها رجعت الى علي بن ابي طالب صلوات الله عليه وآله، إنّها شمس الخلافة بعد الرسول صلعم ومع ما تقدّم رجوع الشمس ليوشع بن النون بعد هرون، فهل على هذا البرهان من مزيد،

يجب القول في اسماعيل صلوات الله عليه في تسليمه الأمر من أبيه صلوات الله عليهم اجمعين، ونحن نأتي بما لا ينكره الامكابر ومعاند يظهر ستر عقيدته والرأي البدي على قلبه رجاء لِيُطْفِئُوا نُورَ ٱللَّهِ ... وَٱللَّهُ مُتِمُّ نُورِهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ ٱلْكَافِرُونَ، LXI,8 ومن ذلك أنّ جعفر صلوات الله عليه وآله لمّا نعيت اليه نفسه جمع خواصّ اصحابه ومن كان بحضرته من حريمه وفعل فعل من تقدّمه وسلّم الأمر الى اسماعيل، فصار اسماعيل باب الله ومحرابه وبيت نوره والسبب الذي بينه وبين خلقه وخليفة الله في أرضه، وقد اتّفقنا نحن وأنتم على ذلك بما تقدّم القول فيه، فلما حضرته النقلة في حياة ابيه كما تقدّم القول في اسماعيل ابن ابراهيم وهرون وموسى قلتم ما بدأ به في شئ كما بدأ به في اسماعيل، وذلك نقص في المعرفة واختلاف في الهواء،

الكشف خوفاً عليهم من فراعنة الزمان ،

واستتر صاحب الحق ولزم التقية كما قال الصادق عليه السلام ،
ودعاتهم تسيح فى الارض كسياحة المسيح عليه السلام ، كل ذلك لطلب دار
هجرة يلجئون اليها ، وذلك عند ما ملك الضد دار هجرة الرسول وادّعاها ، وبذلك
وعدنا رسول الله صلعم بقوله أن الشمس يطلع علينا من المغرب ، وكما فعل
ابوه ابراهيم لما كان الأصل لهذه الشريعة فى توجيه لوط لطلب دار هجرة
وقد تقدم القول به ، وانه لما فتح الشام سافر اليها ورحل عن دار ضده
وخلص المؤمنين من دار الضد والمقام على الذل ، وأقام فيهم أحكام الدين
وتسامع المؤمنين الذين كسر وهم الدعاة فأتوا من جميع الآفاق ، وجددوا
عليهم عهودهم ، وتمسكوا بأئمتهم ، وانه لما قويت يده جاهد من كان حوله
وكل ذلك وثقوا المؤمنين يقسم عليهم غنائمهم كما (كان) سنة الرسول
عليه السلام ، وانه عليه السلام لما قوى أمره وعلا سلطانه هاجر الى حرم جده
فملك بيته المغضوب وخلص من لحق (لحقه) من المؤمنين واهلك من
نازعه من أعداء الدين ، فهل على هذا البرهان من مزيده ، أليس هذا فعل
الائمة المتقدمين والخلفاء السابقين ، ايتونى بمثل هذا فى ائمتكم إن
كنتم تعلمون ،

فإنه لما ظهرت دلائله ونشرت أعلامه وقامت دعوته وظهرت

الى قبر رسول الله عمي فهو حيّ من نظر اليه يراه ،

فلمّا مات صار سخطة على الأُمّة ، ولو كان للحسن ولدٌ لأبطله قول رسول الله صلى الله عليه وعلى آله أنّ الامام لا يقوم وهو حدث حتى يكمل خلقه ، وفي رواية أُخرى اخضر شاربه ، والحسن منذ مات الى وقتنا هذا مائة وعشرون سنة' والناس يعبدون عدمًا ، افترى أنّ الله جلّ وعزّ يسألني عن ظلم الخلق لما احالهم على معدم الشخص ، وقد بطل قول رسول الله صلى الله عليه وعلى آله وسلّم ، من مات ولا يعرف امام عصره مات مَيْتةً جاهليّة ، وقول الصادق عليه السلام من مات ولم يعرف امام عصره حيًّا مات مَيتةً جاهلية ، فلا قول الرسول حفظتم ولا قول الذُرّيّة أخذتم ، فمن امامكم الذى تدعون به والى من ترجعون ، إنّ التاث عليكم شئ من أمر دينكم ، إنّما أنتم مع العدم مرّةً تقولون أنّه في جِبال رَضْوى ، ومرّةً يقيم في الصحراء ، ومَرّةً ساكن في الماء مستعدّ للخروج الى الدنيا للفَصْل بين الاموات والأحياء ، وإنّها لا تعمى الابصار ولكن تعمى القلوب التي في الصدور ، أوَما علمتم أنّ الأئمّة ، لمّا كان من أمر الحسين صلوات الله عليه ما علمتموه ، لزموا العبادة والنسك والزهادة في الدنيا ، ودخلوا كهف التقية وأمروا أشياعهم بلزوم ذلك ، وهو ما روى عن الصادق عليه السلام أنّه قال التقيّة ديني ودين آبائي ، من لا تقيّةَ له فلا دينَ له ، واطلقوا دعاتهم في سائر الارض يدعونهم الى الهُدى ويأمرونهم بالسَتر والكتمان والسياحة في الارض الى أوان

قلتم أنّ أباه لم يجعل عليه وصيًّا ولا خليفةً فيتعلق به كما فعل هرون لما حضرته
النقلة، واستخلف يوشع بن النون على ولده وكما استخلف اسماعيل ابن
ابراهيم الكَبْش المسمّى فى الكتاب على ولده وهو ما حكاه الكتاب عنه بقوله
وَتَرَكْنَا عَلَيْهِ... وَبَارَكْنَا عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَى إِسْحٰقَ، فدلّ XXXVII,107
أنّ البركة وقعت بالكَبْش قبل اسحق، ولمّا سمّى اسماعيل كبشًا كذلك سمّى
موسى بقرةً وذلك لمّا جمع موسى نقبائه بعد غيبة اخيه، قال لهم إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ
يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تَذْبَحُوا بَقَرَةً، يقول إنّ الامام الذى هو خليفة الله فى أرضه II,63
يأمركم بنصب حُجّة يقوم بأمركم ويتولّى قسمة الجارى عليكم الى أوان قيام
صاحب الأمر وانكشاف أمره، ألا ترى الى قول النقباء، أَتَتَّخِذُنَا هُزُوًا اى II,63
إلينا ذبح البقرة أم اليكم، وقد تقدّم القول فى موضعه،

وأنتم تقولون أنّه أوصى اليه قبل أن يفارقه، وكيف يوصى الى من
لا يجوز عليه الحكم، والوصية عندنا وعندكم بأمر الله ووحيه الى السلف
بنصب الخلف كما تقدّم القول به بشهود عدول، وهل يجوز لأحد فى ظاهر
امره أن يوصى ولدًا له اذا كان لم يجرى عليه الحكم، وهل يجوز أن يسلّم الى وصىّ
يوصيه بولده ويستخلفه عليه أن يسلّم اليه ماله حتّى يشهد عليه عدول ويقبل
شهادتهم المنصوب للقضاء، ثمّ تفرّقتم شعوبًا فى ولده وولد ولده الى أن وُلِدَ
محمد ابن الحسن، وكان حبشيًّا فتمسكتم بامامته ولم تشكّوا انّه المنتظر الذى

فعند ذلك قلب الرأی فی أمره وإذ رآه خالياً مِمّا طلبه فيه وغير مستحقٍّ لِما أهله له، وأنّ سبيله سبيل من تقدّمه من المخالفين، وفكر فيما عمله فيه من اشهار أمره وتقدّمته على نفسه فخاف أن يبقى بعده (من) استحق ما عقده له فيغلب على أولياء الله ويطلب منهم اكثر ممّا طلبه آبائه قبله فيهلك الحرث والنسل، فيكون هو أصلاً لذلك، فعند ذلك قتله واشهر امره وتمسّك بما وصل اليه من شيخه ودليله وتخرّى ماسمعه من علمه وترك الأمر فی مكانه إذ كان الامام مستوراً عن الخلق الی أوانه، وإنّه من اسبابه مبسوطةً وعلومه مبثوثةً ودعاته قائمةً واعلامه نيّرةً وشخصه غير مقصود إلی أوان الظهور وتمام المقدور، فهذا سبب ماجری من خبر المأمون مع علی ابن موسی الرضی وقتله له،

وقامت فرقة بعده علی ولده محمد بن علی، وادّعت فيه الامامة وكان علی لما صار الی المأمون خلفه بالمدينة طفلاً صغيراً فی حجراته، ومات وخلفه ابن خمس سنين، وقد اجتمعت الشيعة أنّ الامام لايغيب عن الدار حتّی يخلف ولداً كاملاً مستحقّ الامامة وميراث ابيه، وقد علمنا أنّ ابن خمس سنين الی العشرة لايجری عليه الحكم ولايجوز شهادته ولا يرضی عقله، وإنّه لا يجوز شهادته من لم تجب الصلوة خلفه ولاتوكل ذبيحته ولا رأينا احداً من الملوك المتقدمة من اليهود والنصاری وغيرهم قدم مثل هذا ولا رَضِیَ به، وقد

فقال له امّا الحجّة المطلوبة فلا يحجاب رحمة فحت لك فيهم، فاسمع استماع من يخشى الصمم، يثبّت تثبيت مَن يخاف الزمان، ولقد جرى بينهما ما يطول شرحه ان تقضيناه ويخرج عن حدّ الكتاب، حتّى انّه بسط اليه يدًا كانت عن الحقّ مقبوضةً، وفى الجور مبسوطةً وأنعم اليه وعرفه بمولاه وافاض من نور هُداه، فساواه فى مجلسه فشرح له ما جَرت به السُنَّة الماضية، وتركه على حاله الى أوان الظهور وتمام العقد وبالوقت المعلوم والأجل المحتوم، وأقام معه مدّةً طويلةً يُدَلّ له فى خلواته يبذل نفسه فى مرضاته، ولم يزل يطارحه شيئًا بعد شيءٍ استكمل رضاعه واكتفى بما أخذه منه، ورأى الرّجُل قد قوى أمره وحسن مذهبه وانصرف عمّا كان عليه فعند ذلك عرفه بحال المنصوب وما يكون منه وودعه وسار،

فلما خلا المأمون بنفسه وفكّر فى أمره فكان يأتى على ابن موسى هذا يبسط له مسائل ينتزعها من القرآن وانتزعها من التوراة والإنجيل عن اخبار الماضين وسُنَن المرسلين بما قد رعاه وحفظه عن شيخه وولىّ امره الذى عقد على نفسه ولائه وبايعه فيما أمريه، فلمّا لم يجد عند على ابن موسى شيئًا من الحقّ المطلوب عرفه عند ذلك أنّه سائت بصيرة العامّة حَوله وصدّ عن معرفة مولاه، وعلم أنّ حكمة الله مستورة عن أعداء الدّين والجالسين مجالس الائمة المهديّين، ومذخورة فى أوليائه الى أوان الظهور،

ولیّ عهده والامام بعده، وأقام بین یدیه بخدمته، ولم یشکّ احد من العلویّین والشیعة أنّ الأمر منصرف الیه بعد المأمون، وذلک المأمون اضطرب فی عقله کما فعله مُعَوِیَةُ بن یزید بن معویة لما علم أنّ آبائه غصب الحقّ من أهله فأراد برجوعه الیهم، وذلک أنّ المأمون جمع الفقهاء والعلماء من سائر البلدان وناظرهم فی فَدَک والعوالی حتّی ردّها علی ولد فاطمة بعد اقامة الحجّة علیهم، کلّ ذلک حیلة علی صاحب الأمر، فلم یجدُ الی ذلک سبیلاً لِسَتْرِه نفسه عن الظهور قبل أوانه واختفائه عن اعدائه وانتظار الفَرَج فی حینه وأوانه، وانّ المأمون لما ارتاب علی هذا وَرَأَی اجتماع العلویّة علیه فأراد کشفه واستخبارهُ ولقد کاتبه من ولد العباس خوفاً علی أنفُسهم بمعرفتهم ما فعله آبائهم بآبائهم، وأنّهم إنْ ظفروا بهم طلبوا آثارهم، ولم یشکّ العلویّة أنّ الأمر راجع الیهم به،

واتّصل خبره برجل کان یتصرّف فی الشام من قبل ولیّ الزمان، وکان دار هجرته بیت المقدس، وکاتب صاحب الجزیرة بالتوجُّه الیه فسار نَحْوَه باذلاً نفسه ابتغاءَ مرضات الله وطلباً للدار الآخرة وبَذْل الجهاد فی أوانه، وسار الرّجل حتّی دخل الیه وبذل نفسه وجاهد فی الله حقّ جهاده، فکان من خطاب المأمون فی وقت دخوله الیه، فلما أفلح بالحُجّة علیه ارجو أن تکون الحُجّة الحقّیّة المطلوبة والنعمة الواسعة الموهوبة وباب الرحمة الموجودة فتّحک الله لی،

اسم صاحب التوراة وأنّ موسى دخل عليهما فقال مرحبًا بمولانا يغضب ولا يلعب،

ثم نظرنا فيما ادّعته الفرقة الثانية فوجدناها تقول علينا معرفة الامام ويوسّع علينا الدخول تحت كلّ امام برًّا كان أو فاجرًا والنزول تحت رائهم والمعيشة في أوساطهم والكون تحت كنفهم، فحكموا الاعداء في دمائهم وأموالهم وفروجهم واحكامهم، فخالفوا بذلك سُنَن مَن قدّمنا ذكره من أنبياء الله وأئمّة دينه، فعلمنا أنّ هذا القول أعظم المحال، وأنّ القائل به غثاء الناس وارذالهم لِأنّ الله عزّ وجلّ أمرنا باتباع الأنبياء وركوب سُنَنِهم بعدهم لقوله لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ ٱللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ، وقول الرسول لِأُمّة المؤمنين به لا الغثاء الذى لا يعبأ الله بهم، إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ ٱللَّهَ فَٱتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ ٱللَّهُ، وقوله أَدْعُوا إِلَى ٱللَّهِ عَلَى بَصِيرَةٍ أَنَا وَمَنِ ٱتَّبَعَنِي، ورأينا دعوة هٰولاء الجهال إلى خلاف ما دعانا اليه، فوجب علينا تركهم ودفع أئمتهم الذين بِأحوالهم مثل هذا، وصاروا عندنا مقام ائمّة الضلال الذين اذا فاتهم شئ من الاحكام رجعوا فيه الى الرأى والقياس ووجدنا جميع هذه الفِرَقِ المتقدّمة ادّعت الحقّ لِأنفسها، والعدمَ لغيرها وكَفَّر بعضها بعضًا،

XXXIII,21 — III,29 — XII,108

ثم وجدنا الفِرَق الذين يُعَدّ هٰؤلاء اجتمعت على ولده احمد بن موسى وهو المسمّى بعليّ الرِضَى الذى نصبه المأمون وكتب اسمه على الدراهم وجعله

هذه الطائفة مقام غيرها من الضلال ،

ثم نظرنا فى القصّة العُظمىَ الى أصحاب موسىَ بن جعفر فوجدناهم طائفتين لاندرى أيّهما أضلّ لصاحبه ، ووجدناهم ركبوا سُنن من كان قبلهم، ويدّعون أنّه حىّ الى وقتنا هذا وأنّه لم يمُت ولا يموت ، فقد رأيناه مات فى سِجْن ابن العبّاس ، ورُمِىَ خارجَ السِجن ثلثة ايام حتّى عاينه جميع الناس ، ثمّ دُفِنَ بعد ذلك ، وقد ظفر به ضدّه وقسم ميراثه ونُكِحَت نسائه أُمّهات المؤمنين بعده ونكحها أعدائه وأضداده ، ولم يكن له خليفةٌ تخلصهم من نكاح الحرام ويجمع شَمْلهم وولى الخليفة من ولده الذى زعمتم أنّه امام سترهم ومنع عنهم ذلك كما فعل سائرآبائه لِأنّ الامام القائم بالأمر منصوب (منصوب؟) الخلق والخلق فقراء اليه ، واذا كان مفقود العيان منتظر الرجعة فما منفعةَ مَن بعده به والَى من يرجعون فى أمر حلالهم وحرامهم وفرائضهم واحكامهم ، ومَن يقيم فيهم حدود الله ويفرق بينهم فى الاحكام ، وإنّا متى فقدنا الموجود رجعنا الى عباده ونسَبْنا البارى جلّ وعزّ الى الظلم ، وإنّه احالنا على عدم ، ومتى اختلفنا فى حكمٍ من الاحكام رجعنا الى الرأى والقياس ، وليس هذا من فعل الحكيم أن يأمرنا بالسمع والطاعة لشخص مفقود ، ولو جاز لنا ذلك لأُمِرْنا بعبادة مَن لَم يُلَد لنكون ننتظره حتّى يُلد كما يُنتظر الغائب ،

وقد رَوَت هذه الفرقة أنّ الصادق عليه السلام قال أنّ اسم الامام

ولايشكّون فيه، ويكون وارثًا وموروثًا مع روايات الصادقين عن الله أنّ الامام
لايموت عقيمًا،

ثم نظرنا فيما ادّعته المحمّديّة التى ادّعت أنّ محمد بن جعفر الامام
وانّه قد ظهر بمكّة وجرّد سيفه فى الشهر الحرام فى البلد الحرام الذى اجتمعت
الأُمّة بأسرها أنّ الخروج فيه محرم على الخلق الى يوم القيامة، ورأيناه خرج
على ولد العبّاس فى دارهم بعد أن عاش فى كنفهم وحفظوه وهم حُكّام عليه
فخالف فعل جدّه والأنبياء قبله اذ لم يبيّتوا على أضدادهم فى دارهم حتّى
اتّخذوا لأنفسهم دار هجرة يعتصمون بها ويجاهدون عدوّهم منها، ثم يفتحون
بعد ذلك دار هجرة، وانّا لمّا رأينا سُنّته ومخالفة لِسُنن هولاء المتقدّمين
علمنا أنّه لوكان حجّة الله فى أرضه لم يتعدّ سِيَر آبائه، فأقمنا مقام المتغلّبين
مِن أشباهه، ثم إنّا رأينا ضدّه ظفر به وأخذه وجعل فى عنقه حَبْلًا وطاف
به البلدان ووجّه به الى خُراسان، وأنّه ما دخل مدينةً من المُدُن الّا صعد
فيها منبرها وتبرّأ من دعوته ويشهد بذلك على نفسه ويفوّه بالخطاء بنسب
نفسه الى الضلال، والشيعة بأسرها مجتمعون على أنّ الامام الذى يقوم بمكّة
لايذلّ له رأيه، ورَوَت هذه الطائفة عن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله
أنّه قال اسمُهُ اسمى واسم أبيه اسم أبى، وانّ جعفر لم يكن له ولدًا يسمى
محمد غيره، ويجوز أن يُقال لجعفر عبد الله لأنّ الخلق كلّهم عبيد الله، فأقمنا

أَوحى اليه أن يسلّم الامر الى ولده محمد، دعى نقبائه وخواص اصحابه وسلّم
اليه بمحضر من خاصّته سِتْرًا عليه كما فعل هرون بيوشع ابن النون اذ
جعله خليفةً على ولده الى أنْ تَمّ أمره، وقد كان هذا رَجُلًا كاملًا له أربع
عشرة سنةً، وصاحب هذا العُمر جائز القول مقبول الشهادة، وانما فعل
ذلك لوقت الفترة وهيجان الفراعنة، وأعظمتم الفرية على الله وعلى
أوليائه وجهلتم أن الامر رجع القهقرى، وتركتم قول الله جلّ وعزّ وَجَعَلَهُمْ
كَلِمَةً بَاقِيَةً فِي عَقِبِهِ، ورجعتم الى قوله بالنكوص على الأعقاب، فردّ دتّم IV,27
الأمر الى جعفر بن محمد الصادق صلوات الله عليه، اوليس قد تقدّم في قصّة
يعقوب عليه السلام أنّه لمّا أُمِرَ بالتسليم الى يوسف أَبْيَضت عيناه، وأنّه
لمّا غاب يوسف عن الدار لطلب دار هجرة وتقضي المحنة فقد يعقوب
مجلسه وجمع شَمْلَه وكان يُرسِل أولاده في الآفاق يطلبون صاحب الأمر
وهو ما حكاه الله جلّ وعزّ عن قوله لهم: يَا بَنِيَّ اذْهَبُوا فَتَحَسَّسُوا مِنْ
يُوسُفَ وَأَخِيهِ وَلَا تَيْأَسُوا مِنْ رَوْحِ اللّٰهِ إِنَّهُ لَا يَيْأَسُ مِنْ رَوْحِ اللّٰهِ
إِلَّا الْقَوْمُ الْكَافِرُونَ، XII,87

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وجعفر الصادق صلوات الله عليه فأظهر نفسًا وأزكى روحًا من
أنْ يتعدى حدود الله، وتروون أنّ جعفر الصادق صلوات الله عليه لمّا
حضرته النقلة استخلف المنصور ضدّه على أهله وولده، كلّ ذلك صيانةً

(٥) من كتاب أسرار النطقاء لجعفر بن منصور اليمن

... وقام وليّ الله بعده (محمد الباقر) خليفة الله في ارضه وَبَثَّت نوره جعفر بن محمد صلوات الله عليهما بأمر الله ووَحْيه باحياء معالم الدين وسُنَن المرسلين وجميع المؤمنين على كلمة الاخلاص، وفَرّق دعاته في جزائر الارض، وأقام منار الدين وكُتِبَت عنه العلوم والاخبار وسار بها في جميع البلدان، فلمّا حضره أمر الله في التسليم دَعَى نُقَبائه وخواصّ إخوانه حسب ما فعله الائمة والنطقاء قبله، وسلّم الامر الى ولده اسماعيل بأمر الله ووحيه اليه ويشهدهم على نفسه،

فصار اسماعيل بابَ الله ومحرابه وبيت نوره والسبب بينه وبين خلقه، واجتمعنا نحن وأنتم على ذلك، فلمّا غيّب شخصه في حياة ابيه سِرًّا من أعدائه ومحنةً لأوليائه كما تقدّم القول في اسماعيل بن ابراهيم صلوات الله عليهم، ما بدأ لله في شئ كما بدأ في اسمعيل اذ قبضه في حياة ابيه، وقد روينا نحن وأنتم عن الصادق عليه السلام أنّه قال، إنّ البدء والمشئة لله في كل شئ إلا الامامة، فعظمتم الفرية على الله وقطعتم ما أمر الله به أن يوصل وجاؤوا لِيُطْفِئُوا نُورَ ٱللَّهِ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ، ورجعتم بالامر الى القهقرى ولم تعلموا أنّ اسماعيل عليه السلام لم يغب عن الدار حتّى خلف ولدًا كاملًا، وأنّ الأمر قد رجع اليه بأمر الله ووحيه اليه، وأنّه لمّا حضره ما أراده الله من أمره

بهذا العهد لِيأخذ صولات عليكم لولده اسماعيل، وأخرج عهد مولانا القائم لمولانا المنصور اسماعيل، فسجدوا واطاعوا نَصَّ القائم عليه، وامر بمقاتلة ابى يزيد الدجّال لعنه الله، وظهر المنصور بالله صلع بالعسكر الميمون وحطّ بالشُعَبْ وطرد ابايزيد من المصلّى،

وامر اللعين عسكره، وكان اكثرهم البربر، أنْ يحرسوا الطريق، ومن ظفروا
به قتلوه ونهبوه واستبوا حريمه، حتى انتهى بهم الأمر الى شقّ بطون الرجال
وأرحام النساء يطلبون الخبايا من ذهب ولؤلؤ، حتى آل بهم الحال الى بيع
المِعا وشرائه، ثم تقرمط اللعين النجس وعتى، وافسد وخبث وتمرد، فكان
يبتنى بالساعة الواحدة بالاخوات الابكار الاثنتين والثلث، وقوى
أمره وملك بلاد الغرب اجمع وقابل أضداد الصادق وأضداد امير المؤمنين على
ابن ابى طالب ولى الله، وأضداد عيسى روح الله،

فلمّا آن الأجل وانقضى المهل أمر مولانا القائم عبده المخلص المطيع
جوذر بعهد المهدى بالله صلع، فسلّمه الى شيوخ الدعوة وقرأه عليهم صولات
وكان صاحب الرتبة فتقدّم جوذر به وسلم الى (اليه ؟) صولات فقرأه عليهم
وردّه الى جوذر، ثمّ ردّه جوذر الى مولانا وأمر مرّةً أُخرَى مولاه به اليهم، فقرأه
صولات وردّه، ولم يعلموا غَرَضَ مولانا فى ذلك ولا السِرّ الذى تقدّم به الى
جوذر يوم دفن المهدى بالله عليه، واستودعه رُتْبَة ولده المنصور ونصّ
عليه وعاهده له، فكان جوذر مستودَعًا للمنصور بالله ومن سبب ذلك لم
يكُن ليظهر العهد الى احد وغير جوذر، فلما كان فى المرّة الثالثة أُمره فوصل
به اليهم وسألهم جوذر عن حالته عند مواليه واعتقادهم فيه، وثِقتهم به،
فاخبروه بما يعرفونه له من الحقّ عند مواليه، فقال لهم أنّ مولانا أُمرنى

هذا قوله صلع أوردناه ليعرف العارفون قيامه مع النبي صلع وإنّه
كقيام الامام القائم بأمر الله مع المهدي بالله صلوات الله عليهم اجمعين،
لانّ النور من النور والظهور كالظهور، والذات واحدة والقدرة على ذلك
شاهدة، فظهرت آيات الله وتمّت كلمات ربّك صدقاً وعدلاً،

ولما كان القائم بأمر الله صلع مشابهاً لأمير المؤمنين على ابن ابي طالب
في دور الظهور كانت دولته مشوبة بالتكدير لظهور الضدّ اللعين مخلد
بن كَيْداد ابي يزيد الدجّال لعنه الله في زمانه كما ظهر الاضداد في زمان امير
المؤمنين صلع، وكان مراقد ابي يزيد الأعوج لعنه الله على القيام ابو عمّار
الاعمى المعلّم، وكان مخلد اللعين على رأى الخوارج من الحَرُورِيّة، فاستولى
مخلد على العباد وأظهر في الارض الفساد ولم تزل ظلمته تشتمل وقوّته تظهر
حتّى انتهى الى قرب المهديّة ووصل المصلّى حيث وقع سهم المهدي صلع الذي
رمى به علماً حيث يصل عدوّ الله، وكان اباضيّاً لعيناً يعتقد لعن امير المؤمنين
على ابن ابي طالب والبراءة منه، ويستحلّ سفك دم ذُرّيّته وسبي الذراري،
فحطّ بعساكره على المهديّة وحصرها، وأمر القائم عليه السلام بإقفال الابواب،
واشتدّ الحرب واستعرت الفتنة وعظمت المحلة، واظهر القائم ع م
الطعام المشحون الذي اعدّه هو والمهدي عليهما السلام، وانفقه على
العسكر وعلى الضعفاء من اهل المدينة، حتّى قلّ الطعام، وخرج اهل المدينة

ومن رآنى فقد رأى جميعهم ، وأنا عبدٌ من عباد الله ، فلا تُسمّونا أرباباً وقولوا فى فضلنا ما شئتم لأنّا أبواب الله وحُججه وأُمنائه على خلقه وخلفائه وأئمّة دينه ووجه الله وجنبه وأمر الله وصراطه ، بنا يعذب وبنا يثيب ، اختارنا من بين خلقه ، وطهرنا واصطفانا ، فلو قال فى ذلك قائل لِمَ أَوْ بِمَ أَوْ عَمَّ أَوْ فيمَ لكفر لانّه لَا يُسْئَلُ عَمَّا يَفْعَلُ وَهُمْ يُسْئَلُونَ ، XXI, 23 يا سلمان ويا جُندب من أمن بما قلتُ وأوضحتُ وشرحت وفسّرت فهو مؤمن امتحن الله قلبه للايمان ، واذا ميّز ظاهر قولى وباطنه فهو عارف مستبصر بالغ كامل ، ومن شكّ فيه وارتاب وجحد ووقف فهو ضالّ مقصر ، يا سلمان ويا جُندب أنا أُحيى وأُميت وأخلق وأرزق وأبرئ الأكمه والأبرص وأنبّئكم بما تأكلون وما تدّخرون فى بيوتكم بإذن ربّى ، وكذلك الائمة المحقّون من ولدى لأنّا كلّنا شئ واحد ، يظهر فى كلّ زمان ، فاذا شاء الله شئنا واذا كره الله كرهنا ، الويل لمن انكر فضلنا وما اعطانا الله رسالته ليستكثر قدرته ومشئته فينا ، ولقد أعطانا الله ما هو أعلى وأجلّ وأكبر من هذا كله ، أعطانا الاسم الأعظم الذى لو شئنا لعرجنا به الى السماء وأطاعتنا الشمس والقمر والنجوم والدواب ، ومع هذا فانّا نأكل ونشرب ونمشى فى الأسواق ونعمل ما نشاء بأمر الله ربّنا XXI, 26-27 عِبَادٌ مُكْرَمُونَ لَا يَسْبِقُونَهُ بِالْقَوْلِ وَهُمْ بِأَمْرِهِ يَعْمَلُونَ ، فهذه معرفتى بالنورانيّة فتمسكا بها ترشدا وتسعدا إن شاء الله تعالى ،

فعقد لی وأخذ بیعتی وانا اللوح المحفوظ وألهمنی الله ما فیه، یا سلمان ویا جُنْدَب محمد یس وأنا القرآن الحکیم، ومحمد نون وانا القلم، ومحمد طه وانا القرآن، ومحمد الیاقوتة الصفراء وأنا الیاقوتة الحمراء، ولیس بینی وبین محمد فرق، أنا محمد ومحمد أنا، أنا منه وهو منّی، بقوله مَرَجَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ يَلْتَقِيَانِ بَيْنَهُمَا بَرْزَخٌ لَا يَبْغِيَانِ، ومحمد آلاء الله الأكبر وأنا آلاء الله الأكرم، لقوله LV,19 فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ، یا سلمان ویا جندب إنّ میّتنا لم یمت وقتیلنا LV,21 لم یقتل، ولا نلد ولا نولد،

قال جابر فقبّلت الارض بین یدیه إعظامًا له لما سمعت، وقلت یا مولای قد اشتکل علیّ ممّا سمعتك تکلم به قولك أنا أهلکت القرون الأولی، وقولك فی الباب الثانی أنّ میّتنا لم یمت وقتیلنا لم یقتل، فقال یا جابر أنا الامر من الله لأنّه عزّ وجلّ یقول يُلْقِي الرُّوحَ مِنْ أَمْرِهِ عَلَى مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ XL,15 عِبَادِهِ فلما امرنی الله بقه له فَإِذَا جَاءَ أَمْرُنَا وَفَارَ التَّنُّورُ، بنجاة نوح ع م نَجَّيْتُهُ XI,42 وقوله فَلَمَّا جَاءَ أَمْرُنَا جَعَلْنَا عَالِيَهَا سَافِلَهَا، وامّا قولی أنّ میّتنا لم یمت XI,84 لأنّه من روح الله، وقتیلنا لم یقتل، وأنا مولی کلّ مؤمن ومؤمنة ممّن مضی ومن بقی، یا سلمان ویا جُنْدَب، فلما أُیّدت بما أُیّدت به الأنبیاء من الروح نطقت علی لسان عیسی بن مریم فی المهد، فآدم وشیث ونوح وسام وابراهیم واسمٰعیل وموسی ویوشع وعیسی وشمعون ومحمد، وإنّا کلّنا واحدٌ،

فَإِنّه لايستكمل عبد حقيقة الايمان حتّى يعرفنى بحقيقة معرفتى بالنورانيّة، فاذا عرفنى بهذه الصفة فقد امتحن الله قلبه للايمان وشرح صدره وصار عارفًا مستبصرًا، ومن قصر عن ذلك فهو شاكٌّ مرتاب، ياسلمان قال لكَ جُنْدَب فى هذه الساعة قم بنا نسأله عن معرفته بالنورانيّة، فقال لبّيك كذا كان، فعرّفنا النورانيّة ومعرفة الله فقال صلع وَمَا أُمِرُوا إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ حُنَفَاءَ وَيُقِيمُوا الصَّلَوٰةَ وَيُؤْتُوا الزَّكَوٰةَ وَذَٰلِكَ دِينُ الْقَيِّمَةِ XCVIII,4، يقول وما أُمِرُوا الّا بتوحيد وهو اخلاص العبادة، وقوله حُنَفَاءَ يعنى الإقرار بنبوّة محمد صلع لأنّه صاحب الحنيفة، ويُقيموا الصلوة هى ولايتى، من أقامها أقام الصلوة، لقوله وَاسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَوٰةِ وَإِنَّهَا لَكَبِيرَةٌ إِلَّا عَلَى الْخَاشِعِينَ II,42، ولم يقل الله تعالىٰ وإنهما الكبيرتان لأنّ أكثر الناس مقرّون بنبوّة محمد صلع وقليل من الناس من يقرّ بولايتى إلّا من كان من الخاشعين، وكذلك قال وَبِئْرٍ مُعَطَّلَةٍ وَقَصْرٍ مَشِيدٍ XXII,44، فالقصر هو رسول الله صلع، والبئر انا، عطّلوا والله ولايتى، وقوله وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَوٰةَ، فهى الإقرار بالائمة من ذرّيتى، وهو الزكوة من استكمل ذلك فهو على دين القيّمة وسأبين لكما بعون الله يا سلمان وجُنْدب،

انا ومحمد نورٌ واحدٌ من نور الله، أمر الله ذلك النور لِيَنْشَقَّ نصفين، فقال للنصف الأوّل كُن محمّدًا، وللنصف الثانى كُن عليًّا، فلهذا قال

وقام الامام القائم محمد أبو القاسم صلوات الله عليه وبركاته وأشرف تحياته،
وهو خامس الخلفاء ممثول العظام فيهم مقابل لجدّه الصادق خامس
الائمّة، وللمسيح عيسى بن مريم عليه السلام روح الله محيي الموتى ومبرئ الأكمه
والأبرص، فكان أصل النور وثاني ائمّة الظهور مقابلاً لأمير المؤمنين على ابن أبي
طالب عم فيما قام به بعد النبي محمد صلع ومضاه له حذواً بحذو وموضع سرّ الله
وكلمته الباقية في عقبه الى يوم القيٰمة،

وكان امير المؤمنين على ابن ابي طالب صلعم أوّل القائمين في المقام
الأعظم في دَوْر محمد صلع، وكان الامام القائم بأمر الله أوّل قائم قام بعد
المهدى بالله صلوات الله عليه، فكان له الفضل العظيم والمقام الكريم
الذي عجز أكثر العالم عن دركه، فلم يعرفه بحقيقة غير الامام المهدى بالله
والائمة من ذرّيّته كما أنّه لم يَعْرِفْ أميرَ المؤمنين عليَّ حقيقة معرفته
غيرُ رسولِ الله صلع والائمة من ذرّيّته،

وقد روى جابر بن عبد الله الانصاري لمولانا الامام زين العابدين صلع
وقد أمره أن يذكر ظهور امير المؤمنين على ابن ابي طالب له بالنورانيّة، فقال
كنت جالساً عند امير المؤمنين على ابن ابي طالب عم يوماً اذا دخلا عليه سلمان
وجُنْدَب رضوان الله عليهما، فسلما وجلسا فقال على مرحباً بكما وأهلاً وسهلاً
مِن وليّين مخلصين متعاهدين لربّهما لَعَمْري إنّ ذلك واجب على كلّ مؤمن

فلمّا اراد القائم دفنه فى جانب القصر لم يحضر معه احد على حافة القبر حين أراد إنزال المهدى بالله قدس الله روحه وصلى عليه إلّا جوذر، وقال له يا جوذر انّه لا يحلّ أنْ يدفن الامامُ الامام الذى قبله حتّى يقيم حجّة لنفسه وليس يحلّ ذلك لى حتّى أقيم حجّتى، وقد ارتضيتك لهذه الامانة دون جميع الخلق وتلا عليه قول الله سبحنه إِنَّا عَرَضْنَا ٱلْأَمَانَةَ عَلَى ٱلسَّمَوَاتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ وَٱلْجِبَالِ فَأَبَيْنَ أَنْ يَحْمِلْنَهَا الى اخير الآية، ثم قال أُدْنُ مِنّى فلما دَنا منه XXXIII,72 قال هاتِ يَدَكَ فبسط يَدَه وهو مرغوب لهيبته، وقال إنّا أخذنا عليك عهدَ الله وغليظَ ميثاقه، أنّك تكتُمُ عنّى ما أظهره وأكشفه لك، قال نعم يا مولاىَ صلّى الله عليك، فقال له ولدى اسماعيل المنصور هو حجّتى وولىّ عهدى، فاعرف حقّه وقدره، وأكتم أمره وسرّه حتّى اظهره فى الوقت الذى يريد الله فيه ظهوره، ثم دفن المهدىَ بالله، وقد كان لجوذر من القيام والخدمة والوفاء بعهد الائمة ما بعضه مذكورٌ فى كتاب منصور الذى شرح فيه سيرته وقيامه مع الائمة الاربعة صلوات الله عليهم وعلى سَلَفهم وخَلَفهم، فمن أراد الوقوف عليه فهو معروف مشهور، ولا حول ولا قوّة الّا بالله، ولا امام ولا حجّة الّا بتائيده ولا قوّة لنا الا بالاعتصامُ بحجّته فى أرضه فلا حول لنا ولا قوّة الّا بالله العلىّ العظيم.

يدخل الى المولى ويخرج ويبلغه عن قومٍ أمره بقضاء حوائجهم وابلاغهم اليه، فقال له المولى رُح بارك الله فيك فخرج الرجل معتبسًا وجوذر ينظر اليه فانكر حاله وسأله عن خبره، قال كنت أرجو مولانا يهب لى شيئًا أشرف به على عولتى فلم يتمّ لى شئ ممّا أملته منه، فقال إنّ البركة التى دعا بها لك أعظم من كل ما على الدنيا من حطام، قال له قد كان الذى أمله أعجب اليّ من البركة، قال له جوذر فهل لك الى أن تبيع منّى البركة التى دعى لك بها بعشرة مثاقيل، قال نعم، فعدّ له العشرة المثاقيل واستقضى عليه فى تسليم البركة بيعًا جائزًا نافذًا لا رجوع له فى شئ منها ولا ثنيّة ولا ضمير بكنه، وقبل جوذر ما اشترى وافترقا عن تراض منهما، فلمّا كان النهار الثانى أمر المهدى بالله بجوذر فسأله عن ذلك فأخبره فقال له بارك الله فيك ولك واعطاه مائه مثقال بالحسنة عشر امثالها، فاستقرّ ذلك الدعاء وتلك البركة فى جوذر حتّى خدم بعد المهدى القائم والمنصور والمعزّ صلوات الله عليهم، وسار معه لمّا هاجر الى المشرق وانتقل فى الطريق قدّس الله سرّه،

ولما توطّدت قوانين الدعوة الهادية، سلام الله على وليّها، بالمهدية وظهر اهل الكهف من كهف التقية، وآن الأجل وانقضى المهل سلّم الامام المهدى بالله الى ولده القائم رتبته وأدى اليه وديعته وامانته واظهر الغيبة وانتقل بجوار ربّه والقدوم عليه،

ثلثة ايام وهو لا يعقل أمر قميصه لِأنّه يبيت مخالفًا على أن يكون على ولىّ الله مخالفًا خادعًا نعوذ بالله من الجور بعد الكَوْر والشك بعد الايقان والنكوص بعد الايمان، ونسئله أن يجعل مَوْتنا ونحن بحبله معتصمون، وبعُرْوة الخضوع لمن أمرنا الله بطاعته ملتزمون غير مستنكفين ولا مستكبرين ولا مولين عن قبلة الحقّ ولا مدبرين بحقّ محمد وآله الطاهرين،

فأمر ولىّ الله صلعم بابى عبد الله الشيعى فظهر بالقتل وصلى عليه وترحم ولم يبطل صالح عمله لما حدث من زلله. وقُتِل معه اخوه ابو العباس المستكبر المصرّ على الابلاس، وظهر منه دعوته وتبرّء منه معلمًا بذلك كافة الناس فباء بالخسران المبين وحرم خير الدنيا والدين واركس مع الظالمين،

ثم ان ولىّ الله صلعم أمر بعمارة المهديّة، فلمّا أتمّها وأكملها انتقل اليها وجعلها دار هجرة الامام القائم بأمر الله امير المؤمنين وأمر مَن يَرمى منها بسهمٍ، فوقع السهمُ فى موضع قد أشار اليه فأمر ان يبنى على الموضع الذى انتهى اليه السهم مُصَلّى، وقال الى هاهنا يصل الدّجال مُخْلد بن كَيْداد لعنه الله، وقال لرجل من شيعته يسمّى موسى ابن احمد، يا موسى اليوم امنت على الفاطميّات، وكان الضدّ اللعين مخلد بن كيداد قد وُلد فى بلاد السودان فى موضع يسمى كوكوا،

وقام المهدى بدعوته احسن قيام وامدّ دُعاته فى سائر البلدان،

الطشت وجلس عليه، فقال المنجّم انّه فى مدينة سورها صفر وهو فى قلعة فى المدينة حوّلها الماء، فما زال يقسم المدينة حتى اظهره فقبضوا عليه وعلى القائم بامرالله صلعم وسجنوهما، فلمّا صار بالسجن وفيه قوم مسجونون منذ مدّة طويلة، فقال لهم تحبّون أن تخرجوا معى من السجن، فتغامزوا به مستهزئين وقالوا هم يريدون النهوض به الى الشام وهو يعد نفسه بما لا يكون، فنهض الى باب من ابواب السجن فقلعه وأخذ الفحم وخطّ فى الباب صورة مركب، فلما أكمل الصورة قال من احبّ منكم الخروج فليقعد معى على الباب، وجلس على الباب هو وولده وجلس معه الجميع إلّا واحد منهم كذّب ذلك، فلما رأى الباب ارتفع فى الهواء تعلق به فسقط فاندق ساقه، ووقع الباب على النيل، واشتهر الخبر وخاب من كفر، ونظر الناس الى الباب على البحر يجرى فايقنوا المهدى المنتظر المبشر به، وشاعت الاخبار بذلك فانصرفت الأضداد عنه،

وخرج الى سجلماسة ثم الى القيروان ورقّادة، فأخذ العهود والمواثيق وكثرت الاستجابة الى دين الحق، وكان خروجه من سجلماسة على يد داعيه ابى عبد الله رحمة الله عليه، فاقام مدّةً حتى دخل فى عقل الشيعى ابى عبد الله اخوه ابو العبّاس واستزلّه وقال له ليس هذا المهدى وكان الشيعى يدخل على ولىّ الله وقميصه مقلوب، ومكث على ذلك

وكان المهدى بالله صلعم رابع الخلفاء ممثول المُضْغَة فى الدور ومقابلاً
لجدّه الباقر صلعم ولموسى كليم الله عم صاحب العصى ومبين الآيات ومظهر
البينات وكانت معجزاته باهرةً وآياته ظاهرةً ، ويقابل من الخلقة الشمس
الرابعة من الاملاك التى لها قوّة الامداد لما علا ولما دنى منها فى العالم الطبيعى ،

وهو قائم بما قام به جدّه محمد صلع خاتم الانبياء وسيّد الاصفياء
وبه بشر وبظهور أمره انذر فى مواقف عدّة واشارات جمّة ، وقال على وفاء
الثلثمائة من هجرتى تطلع الشمس من مغربها ، فكان شمس الله الطالعة
وآيته الساطعة ، والحجاب الأعظم والباب الأشرف الاكرم حامل امانة الله
ووديعته ومسلّمها الى القائم بامر الله ولده المنتسب اليه بتعليمه وافادته
وهو خليفته ، القائم منه كعلىّ جدّه امير المؤمنين من محمد رسول الله
الامين صلوات الله وبركاته وتحياته عليهم اجمعين ،

وكانت قد ظهرت معجزاته وقامت آياته وابانت فضله دُعاتُه
فظهرت دعوته فى اليَمَن والغَرْب وانجلى ممّن المؤمنين لما علموا من دنو
ظهوره شدّة الكَرْب ، ولما انتهى الى مِصْر وهو قاصد للغرب فى سفره وجد
فى سيره والاقطار قد امتلئت من ذكره وخبره ، وأتى بعض المنجّمين الى صاحب
مصر وأمر أن يقسم البلدان ليعلم فى اى الجزائر هو وفى اى بلد موضع مسكنه ،
فلما علم ذلك ولىّ الله صلعم أمر بِطَشْتِ صفر فجعل فيه منير فى ماء ذلك

منهم، ثمّ إنّ الامام صاحب الزمان تقدّم للهجرة الى المغرب والمهدى فى كنفهٖ فأظهر النقلة فى سَفَره وأوصى الى أخيه سعيد الخير، واستكفله واستودعه لولده وكفّله سعيد الخير وتسمّى بالامامة بِأمر الناصّ عليه سِتْراً على ولى الله واخفاءً المقامه عن أهل دعوته حتى يكون أوان ظهوره وطلوع نوره، وأمر الحدود بذلك وأن يكنوه بالشمس الطالعة سِتراً على ولى الله ولده القائم من بعده، فلم يطّلع احد عليه ولا وقف على سرّ الله فيه إلّا الخلصاء الابرار المصطفون الأخيار العارفون لِسرّ الله فى اوليائه المطّلعون على معرفة ما أظهر لهم من اصفيائه حتّى اذا آن الميقات وبطنت الدعوةَ الدُعاةُ وأشاروا الى ولىّ امرهم الذى أُمِرُوا بالاشارة اليه، واوضحوا فضله لمتبعيهم ودلّوا عليه وبشّروا بظهور الشمس من غربها ووعدوا بدنوّ الميقات لظهورها من استتار حُجُبِها،

فقام المهدى صلوات الله عليه

وقد انتشرت دعوته فى الآفاق واستدلّ بواضح براهينه أهل الخلاف فرجعوا الى الوفاق، فظهر من سِجِلْمَاسَة على يد داعيه إبى عبد الله صاحب الدعوة بالمغرب قدس الله روحه، ومعه الامام القائم بامر الله محمد بن عبد الله المستحقّ بعده للخلافة والذى اليه دعوة الاولياء كافة، والمهدى بالله كافل له فى كفالته ومشير بعالى مقامه الى أهل دعوته،

الكمال وصار الى غاية الآمال ونهاية الأسباب ، والله تعالى بريء ممن أشرك به غيره واتخذ الهاً دونه أو عبد شخصاً لم يقمه واتخذ رباً لم يرفعه ، هذا قوله أعلى الله قدسه ،

فالعين العظيمة العقل الأول والإبداع الافضل الظاهر بأشرف الحجب والباطن بغيب مبدعه الذى ليس لأحد الى دركه مذهب ، والعين العظيمة على الذى عناه الله تعالى بقوله وانّهُ فى أُمّ الكتاب لدينا لعلىّ حكيم ، ومن ورث مقامه الذى فهو مقام الوحدة فذلك الاسم واقع عليه ، ولا بُدّ لكلّ مقام من حُجُبٍ شريفةٍ يكون أعلاها وأسماها حُجّته التى هى أرفع الحُجَج ، ودون مقام الامامة الأعظم ، وهو غاية الحدود ومنتهى الوجود ومحلّ الفيض والجود ، فافهم يا اخى صفة الحجاب وما خُصّ به وتعلق بما اتّصل بك من سببه لتكون من الناجين وتدخل مع أولياء الله فى الحرم الامين ،

والآن نرجع الى ما كنّا فيه من ذكر الامام الحسين المقتدى عليه السلام ، فقام مُتَمِّماً لأوضاع ابيه وعلومه وأحكامه ، فلخص من الرسائل كتاب الجامعة ذات الفوائد النافعة ، وبثّ دعاته وكثر الاستجابة الى دين الحق لقرب ظهور المهدى صلعم وأنفذ الحسين بن الفرح بن حَوشب المنصور الى اليمن ، وكان اهل النجوم والحساب يذكرون ظهور المهدى بالله ويبشّرون بدولته ، ثم انّ الملوك الأضداد أيقنوا بذلك حتى أنّ كثيراً منهم تبرء من الامر كملك صَنْعا وكثير

الخليل فى النُطقاء، ولزين العابدين فى الاتمّاء فى وجوب الحوادث والتلبيس فظهور المعجزات لقرب ظهور الرابع وهجرته،

وكان حجّة ثالث الخلفاء احمد الملقب بالحكيم من ولد مولانا الحسين بن على بن ابى طالب صلعم تسلّم مرتبته من عبدالله بن الميمون قدّس الله روحهُ وهو الحجّة الجليل قدرها، العظيم خطرها وارفع الحُجُب وأسمائها وألطفها وأعلاها، وهو الذى ظهر منه لأوليائه وبدأ عنه لأصفيائه كما ظهر زين العابدين لجابر بن عبدالله الانصارى فى صورة الميم والفاء والحاء والسين، وعاد الى صورة العين، وقال أعقلك يحتمل هذا يا جابر، هى قُمُص فى كلّ وقت وزمان تتبدّل القُمُص ولا أتبدّل فالأنبياء والائمة هم هَياكِل النور المتجلّى بهم الحقّ عند الظهور،

كما قال الداعى جعفر بن منصور اعلى الله قدسه فى كتاب الكشف حيث قال العين عظيمة غاية كلّ غاية يُشار بها الى البارى عظيم القدر الذى لا تدركه صفات الخلق ولا دنس ولا تغيير زمان بل هو مُزمّن الزمان ومعنى كل عصر وأوان وحقيقة كلّ دَهْر، فجلّ مدهّر الدهور وقاضى بواطن عزم الامور الذى لم يزل فى الأرض معروفًا فى الدهر والأزمان وموصوفًا فى جميع بيوته بائنًا عن جميع أشكاله، منفردًا بكمال قضائه، واحدًا عند من عرفه موجودًا عند من وصفه سبحنه بل من عرف الحجاب فقد ارتدى بالبهاء

الرحيم، فاذا حُجب الابصار عنك وبدا شخصك بيّن ضيائه، فرأيت منه ما حملت،
ورأى الخلائق منه ما قابله فيك، فينطق بما نطق فيك، ويقول ما قاله بك، ونحن
من ورائه وهولنا ظاهر، فمتى حملت منه ما حملك منّا كنّا نحن بك كما نحن منه
فاسرع فى كشف ما بيننا وبينك تجد ما غاب عنك ينالك وما ذلك على الله بعزيز،

فهذا فصل ابان فيه الباقر صلعم معرفة الحجاب الأعظم الذى هو أرفع
الحُجُب وأشرفها وأعلاها وأقربها، فاذا كان ذلك الحجاب فكيف المحتجب،
إنّ الأبصار عن نظره لكليلة والبصائر عن معرفته قصيرة غير طويلة، ولذلك
LXXIII,26 قيل حيث ما ظهر النور فاسجُد، فاذا كانوا كذلك فغير بديع أن يظهر من علمهم
صلعم ما يبهر الالباب، ويبلبل العقول أن لم تتّصل الى معرفة معانيه بالاسباب،

فكانت معجزة ثانى الخلفاء عظيمةً والطريقة الى معرفته قويمةً
وذلك احمد المحمود بما ابدأه العظيم بما أسرّه وأخفاه، من نوره ظهرت
الانوار، وبمعرفته عرف السلام المؤمن المهيمن العزيز الجبّار،

ولما أتت نقلته ودنت الى دار الكرامة رفعته سلّم الأمر الى ولده
الحسين بن احمد وجعله بيت نوره الشريف الممجد،

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فقام الحسين بن احمد المقتدى الهادى صلوات الله عليه،
وهو الثالث من الخلفاء ممثول العلقة فى الدّوْر مقابل لابراهيم

الله عظيمة وآياتهم قدسية كريمة لأنّ نورهم من نور الأوّل الذى منه الانوار استمدّت وعن معرفته طرق العقول انسدت، وانّما غاية أُولى الالباب الى الوقوف دون معرفة الحجاب الذى هو أقرب الحجب واعلى الرتب، وهو الباب الذى وقفت دونه الحدود، وذلك دون رتبة الحجّة العظمى التى هى منتهى الرُتب وغايتها، وتلك هى الرتبة السلسليّة العالية الكليّة،

كما رفع جابر بن زيد الجُعفى عن الباقر، قال دخلت على مولانا عليه السلام وبيَدِه مسباح من زيتون، وهو يقول سبحان مَن كلّما رفعت عنه حجاباً انكشف لى منه باب، وكلّما قرعت عليه باباً ظهر منه حجاب، سبحان مَن منتهى طالبيه اليه ومصير من قصده الى نوره، فقلتُ فى خاطرى إنّك لعظيم، فرفع رأسه الىّ وقال إنّ العظيم مَن أتابه عظيم والعليم من أتابه عليم بما بدأ الىّ منه، انا عبدالله يُوحى الىّ أنْ لا تعبدوا الّا الله عزّ وجلّ، فقُلتُ فى نفسى هذا الحجاب فكيف المحتجَب، فرفع رأسه الىّ فرأيت ضياءً اعظيماً ونوراً مضيئاً لا يكاد بَصَرى يقع عليه ولا عقلى يحيط به، وهو يقول إنّ هذا بعض أَوليائك المكرمين، وقال لى هل أزيد، فقلتُ حسبى، فقال ياجابر اِبشِرْ بتطهير الله لك لنزول ظلّه بك وظهور بابه منك سَلْسَلَ الكريم، ياجابر سلمان منّا اهل البيت ظاهره ممثّل ظهر بابٍ وباطنه من نور حجاب الرحمن

ذلك مصيبون وأنّ لا ذنب عليهم ولا عيب ينسب اليهم فى قتل ذريّة النبوّة قضاءً ابما طلّ من دماء قريش،

فلمّا علم وليّ الحقّ ذلك صنّف الرسائل واظهر فيها ما اظهر من علوم الفلسفة الأربعة ماهم عنه عاجزون، وشدّ أركان الشريعة ووطد قوانينها بالمقابلات والشواهد التى لا تختل ولا تستحيل عن المعانى، ولمّا كملت نشرها الحدود حتّى شاعت واشتهرت فنظر المأمون منها مابهره واعجزه وحيّره وأوقف المنجّمين على ذلك فاعجزهم ونبّههم على اشياء غائبة عنهم ودلّهم على علم المجسطى ولجدث عليه اذهم لا يحسنون فيه شيئًا، فعند ذلك علم المأمون أنّ وليّ الامر متكتّم وأنّ الارض لا تخلو من حُجّةٍ، فرجع عزمه عمّا نواه وتصلف على وليّ الامر وعلى العلويّة وارسل الى القضاة والفقهاء من البلدان ووكل الفاطميين فَدَكِ والعوالى، وخصم فى ذلك ففلج وأمر بالنداء فى البلدان مَن كان مِن نسل فاطمة عم فليصل الى المأمون لقسطه من فَدَكَ والعوالى، وخصم من خاصمه بذلك، وابان الحُجّة بأنّ فَدَكَ والعوالى هبة من رسول الله صلعم لفاطمة ... فوصل اليه جماعة من الفاطميين وكان فيمن وصل اليه على بن موسى الرِضَى (الثانى) من الائمة السّتّة عند الامامية الاثنى عشريّة

...وكانت معجزته كمعجزة الثانى من النُطقاء وما كان فى زمانه من الطوفان المهلك لِاُولى العدوان والمورد لهم دار الهوان، ومعجزات اولياء

ولما انتهت مدّته وتمّت دعوته اقام ولده احمد التقى، وصعد الى المقاما
الشريفة التى هى فى عالم الملكوت ترتقى،

فقام الامام احمد بن عبد الله التقى عليه صلوات الله وسلامه بأمر الله
ووحيه، وهو الثانى من الخلفاء، وحُجّته عبد الله بن ميمون، واحمد بن عبد الله
عليه السلام ممثول النُطفة فى دَوْرهم مقابل لنوح ثانى النطقاء ولجدّه الحسين
ابن على ثانى الائمة، فنشر العلوم ظاهرًا وباطنًا وصنف الرسائل وجعلها على
العلوم الاربعة ...

وشدّ أركان الشريعة وثبت قوائمها بالمقابلات من الآفاق والأنفُس،
وابهر العجم والعرب حتّى أقبلت الأُمّة على حدود دينه يدارسونهم فى هذه العلوم
وولى الحقّ عنهم مكتوم، وسبب ذلك أنّ المأمون جمع المنجّمين وأنفق
عليهم الأموال الجمّة لعمل الزيج الذى باسمه، ووُلاة الامر مكتومون داخلون
فى كهف التقيّة، وظنّ المأمون أنّ الفاطميين نفدوا وما بقى للشريعة من
يُقيم دعائمها ويوضح مراسمها، وطمع فى إبطال شريعة محمد صلع، وأراد أنْ
يُظهر علم الهيئة ويجعل معرفتها الدين، وأنّ للهيئة المبدأ والمعاد وعلى معرفتها
الحساب والعقاب والثواب ليرى الخلق أنّ الذى جاء به محمد صلع لا أصل
له وأنّ الصحابة لمّا تيقنوا ذلك عملوا بعلى عليه السلام ما عملوا وأنهم فى

الخلفاء لكون الحسن بن على عليه السلام أول الأئمة ، فكتم نفسه وستر
حُجُبه وحدوده فكان حجته وحجابه عبد الله بن ميمون رضوان الله عليه
ولم يُظهر علمه لأحد ولا اطّلع عليه ولا عرفه إلّا حملة العرش القائمون
بأمر الله أُمناء خليقته وفضلاء حُجَجه المنصوبون فى دعوته، وكان استتاره
كظلمة الليل الشديد ، وذلك لما غلب الباطل على الحقّ ولشدّة دولة
الظلمة من آل عبّاس وعظم الريب والوسواس ، وكان لشدّة استتار
الامام عليه السلام إذا أخذ احد من حدود دينه العهد على مستجيبين
الى دعوته يقول له وانّك سمعًا وطاعةً لولىّ العصر، ولا يفوه باسمه
وإذا ترشّح فى العلم وعلت فيه درجته وارتفعت منزلته كتب له اسم الحُجُب
ولا يكشف له اسم امامه ولا يبينه باشارة ولا عبارة فى كلامه الّا بعد
قد بلغ الاطلاق واستحقّ كشف معرفة امامه باستيجاب واستحقاق
وجرى ذلك مدّة الائمة المستورين حتّى طلعت شمس الحقّ من مغربها
وأنارت آفاق الدين لكل مستمسك بالعروة الوثقى ...

قد شرح ذلك الداعى محمد بن زيد قدس الله روحه فى كتاب البلاغ
اسنادًا الى الصادق أنّه قال لخاصّته ابتغوا فى السّماء سلّمًا تجدوا ما تحبّون
فقال أحد حدوده وما ذلك السلّم يا مولاى ، فقال مراتب العلم يرتقى
المرتقى اليها بعلم ويتوجّه نحوها بمعرفة وفهم ...

الدأو، فعطّل ذلك الاعتقاد وبيّن فيه المراد كشفاً للحقائق واظهار البيان الصادق وقياماً بالتأويل الذى عرف فيه التوحيد بحقيقة، ونزه البارى سبحانه عن صفة خليقته وعرفت الملائكة بجوهرها اللطيف وبين الثواب والعقاب على ما يعتقده اهل التجسيم والتكثيف،

وذلك كفعل امير المؤمنين على ابن ابى طالب صلوات الله عليه فإنّه اوّل قائم بكشف المعنى، ومبيّن للباطن الشريف الأسنَى، والأئمة الطاهرون فانهم بذلك قائمون وعلى المحافظة عليه دائمون، فقاموا بالقوّة لأهل القصور الذين عنهم بيان المعنى مكتوم ومستور، وقاموا بالفعل لأهل الحقائق العارفين وكشفوا لهم ما كانوا عن معرفته واقفين، فإنّهم يا اخى ما أُوتيت من الحكمة، واعلم فضائل اولياء الله الائمة وتلقى ما أوتيت وكن من الشاكرين واستمسك بالعُروة الوُثقَى والحبل المتين،

ولما أتت لمولانا محمد ابن اسماعيل صلوات الله عليه نقلته ودنت غيبة سلم الارض الى ولده عبد الله الرضى وجعله له الخلف والوصى،

فقام عبد الله الرَضِيّ المستور صلى الله عليه، (وهو) اوّل ثلثة الائمة المستورين بأمر الله ووحيه، وتسلّم الرتبة من والده وخلفه فى شريف مقامه، وهو كسُلالةٍ مقابل لآدم فى دور الاوّل النطقاء، وهو أُول

ابن اسماعيل ومبيناً لحدّه الشريف الجليل اذا هو سابع الائماء المبيّن للمعنى، وللسابع قوّة تكون ليس لمن تقدّمه، ولذلك كانت قوّة القائم صلع لما كان سابع النطقاء، والذي كان للامام محمد بن اسماعيل كان لسابع الخلفاء الذى هو المعزّ لدين الله صلوات الله عليه، سابع أسبُوعين ورابع أربعة، وكذلك لمولانا الامام الطيّب ومثل ما كان سيكون وما عُلم سيُعلم وما تحت الشمس شئ بجديد، ولا تزال تكرار الأسابيع يكون سابع الائمة أقواهم واجمعهم للعلوم وأكثرهم بياناً واوضحهم برهاناً حتّى يكون الانتهاء الى القيام الآخر صاحب الكشف والظهور ومبيّن العلم المستور، والكشف هو انكشاف المعانى من غواشيها وبيانها المتحقّقها فمن بلغ الى ذلك فهو أهل دَوْر الكشف وقد عرف القائم وبان له الفضل والجزاء، وبلغ الميعاد وشاهد أهل ذلك الدور عياناً عقلياً لا حسّياً وكشفاً لا ستْرَ فيه جليّاً،

ومحمد بن اسماعيل صلع لم يُبْطِلْ شيئاً من ظاهر شريعة محمد صلى الله عليه وآله، بل أكّدها وأمر بالعمل بها، وعلى ذلك سنّة الائمة الطاهرين من أبنائه التابعين لهم قياماً بالتكليفات ومحافظة على المفترضات من غير ترخيص ولا اهمال ولا ترك ولا ابطال، وانّما عنى الامام المعزّ بقوله وعطلت بقيامه ظاهر شريعة محمد لما كان لمعانيها مبيناً ولاسرارها كاشفاً ومجلياً، فأزال عن أتباعه وأشياعه اعتقاد الظاهر على ما فيه من تعطيل وتشبيه للمُبْدِع الحق بمخلوقاته وتمثيل وتجسيم للملائكة الروحانيّين واعتقاد لذلك على ما هو موجود فى هذه

دَوْرِ السَّتْرِ لِأَنَّكَ اذا عددتَّ آدم ووصيّه وائمة دوره كان خاتمهم الناطق وهو نوح عليه السلام ... واذا عددتَّ عيسى ووصيّه وائمة دَوره كان محمد صلع متسلّماً لمراتبهم وهو الناطق الخاتم للنطقاء، وكان وصيّه عليه السلام بالفضل منفردًا، واذا عددتَّ الائمة فى دوره كان محمد بن اسماعيل سابعهم، وللسابع قوّةٌ على من تقدّمه، فلذلك صار ناطقًا وخاتمًا للأُسْبوع وقائمًا، وهو ناسخ شريعة صاحب الدور السادس ببيان معانيها واظهار باطنها المُبَطَّن فيها.

وبذلك نطق مولانا الامام المعزّ لدين الله صلوات الله عليه حيث قال فى دعاء يوم السبت، وعلى القائم بالحق الناطق بالصدق التاسع من جدّه الرسول الثامن من ابيه الكوثر السابع من آبائه الائمة، سابع الرسل من آدم وسابع الاوصياء من شيث وسابع الائمة من آله سلام الله وصلواته عليهم اجمعين، الى قوله، علينا سلامه، الذى شرفته وعظمته وكرمته وختمت به عالم الطبائع وعطلت بقيامه ظاهر شريعة محمد صلع، وتملأ به الارض عدلًا وقسطًا كما ملئت جورًا وخبطًا، كالذى قال النبى المهدى منّا أهل البيت رجل أشمّ الانف أقنى الحل يملأ الارض عدلًا كما ملئت جورًا وخبطًا، وهو مترجم القرآن ومفسّره ومُظهر بيانه ومنوّره وقائم يوم القيمة والفصل والبعث والتغابُن، هذا قوله صلوات الله عليه موضحًا لفضل محمد

الكُبرَى، لِأنّ القيامات كثيرة أوّلها المأذون المكفوف، ثم المأذون المطلق، ثم الداعى المحصور، ثم الداعى المطلق، ثم داعى البلاغ، ثم الحجّة وغايتها الباب، وإنّما كانت هذه الحدود قيامات كقيام كل واحد منهم بما يتصل به من الصّوَر المجرّدة المفارقة للأجسام الصائرة الى أفقه المعروفة به، ويتلو هذه القيامات قائم قيامة كبرى وهو المقام الذى هو الامام عليه افضل السلام، فهو قائم القيمة ونهاية النهايات، وكل حدّ مَن ذكرنا قائم بنسبة الى من دونه ويتلوها جميعًا قائم القيمة الكبرى صاحب البطشة العظمى المجتمعة عنده جميع المقامات وهو لهم غاية الغايات الشريفة الجامع لها من أوّل الثلثة آلاف السنة التى هى آخر دور الكشف الى آخر دَور محمد صلى الله عليه وعلى آله، وبه رمز مولانا امير المؤمنين على ابن ابى طالب صلع بقوله لعشرة آلاف سنة تقوم صورة اشارة الى هذا المقام العظيم الجامع لمقامات الادوار فى مسلك علمه النظيم، وهو الذى يخلف العقل العاشر بعد نقلته، ويقوم مدبّرًا للعالم فى رتبته وإنما وقع عليه اسم الناطق السابع لنطقه بالأمر الالهى، وجمعه للفضل الذى هو اليه متناهى، وليس بمُتِمٍّ ولا رسولٍ بل هو منفرد برتبة الوحدة، وقد تمّ التمام واتّسق النّظام،

وانما خُصّ محمّد بن اسماعيل بذلك لِانتظامه فى سلك مقامات

وَلَدَيْن خاليَيْن من الامامة وهما اسماعيل وجعفر، وشخص الى نَيْسابُور بنفسه منكتمًا عن ضدّه، وهو بيدو ورما بينهما وبين الدَيْلَم، وتزوّج بنَيْسا بُور امرأةً فولدت له ولدًا فسمّاه عبد الله وكناه الرَضيّ، وعرف عبد الله الامام بالعطّار كتمًا لمقامه واخفاءً اله، ونصب له حُجُبًا وأمر كل واحد من الحُجُب والحُجَج أن تسمّى باسم الامام، فمن أخذ العهد على مستجيب سمّى له أحد أُولائك الحُجُب حتى يمضى الوهم اليه سِتْرًا على صاحب الامر، وجرت بذلك السُنّة والقضيّة فى الائمة المستورين الثلاثة، فمن ذلك أنّ الدّعاة فى أوضاعهم يسمّون هولاء الائمة باسماء مختلفة ما اتّفق منها فى ذلك اثنان،

فقام محمد باللسان وصَمَتَ عنه السيف الى بلوغ كتاب أجله فأظهر العلوم وبيّن الحقائق وكشف لخلصائه منها السرّ المكتوم، فظهرت منه حقائق ومعجزات ودلائل وآيات لم يظهر فى الائمة من قبله ولا قام احد من الائمة بمثله لِأنّه السابع صاحب القوّة والظهور والضياء والنور ومبين العلم المستور، وكان محمد بن اسماعيل متمّ الدور المنتهية اليه غاية الشرائع المختومة به المشتمل على مراتب حدودها المحيط بعلومهم وهو القائم بالقوّة صاحب الكشفة الأولى لِأنّ القائم بالفعل هو القائم الكلّى الذى هو صاحب الكشفة الأُخرى والبَطْشَة العُظْمى، قائم القيٰمة

وتخليصهم من غرق طوفان الضلال والشبهات، فمن شاء فليؤمن ومن شاء فليكفر،

فقد صحّت امامة اسماعيل بن جعفر وبقيت كلمة الله في عقبه وفي

كلّ امام من ذرّيته إن ظهر او استتر، وبطل ما ادّعاه المفترون وخاب

الاشقياء المبطلون، والله يريد أن يُتِمّ نُورَه وَلَوْكَرِهَ ٱلْكَافِرُونَ، ولما IX,32

بلغ محمد بن إسماعيل عليه السلام اشدّه وزالت عنه اوهام اهل الظلم ممّا

لبّس عليه جدّه صلوات الله عليه وعليهم اجمعين،

وقام محمد بن اسماعيل صلوات الله عليه، وهو سابع الائمة

وقائمهم مقابل لجدّه على أمير المؤمنين تمام الدور الروحاني والخلق الآخر

الذي هو نفس الشئ وروحه ومعناه، وهو تمام الدور الاوّل ومنه ابتدأ

الدور الثاني،

وكان بالمدينة فقام بدين الله سبحانه وبثّ الدعاة ونشر العلوم وأمر

دعاته بطلب دار هجرة يلجأ اليها، وكان في عصر الرشيد، فلما بلغه علم محمد بسبب

انتشار دعوته أمر بالقبض عليه وأن يؤديه اليه، وكان الامام قد اعدّ بداره سَرَبًا

يكتتم فيه من الضدّ، فلمّا وصل الرسول من الرشيد الى المدينة دخل ذلك السَرَب

واختفى فيه، وطلبوه فلم يجدوه ولاقدروا عليه، فعادوا الى الرشيد وانهوا اليه

خبر ما فعلوه، ولما هذا الطلب سار الامام في طلب دار هجرته وخلف بالمدينة

الإلهيّة تجلی بالنور الربّانی، قال جعفر بن منصور الیمن نضّر الله وجهه واعلی قدسه فالامامة لاتتغیّر ولاتنتقل جاریاً أبداً مع مُرور الدهر، فالائمة ینتقلون ویصیرون الی دارکرامته ومحلّ رضوانه بغیبة أشخاصهم وقیام الخلف منهم فی مقام السلف باتّصاله بالامامة لِأنّ الامامة تنتقل ولاتزول، وانّما الائمة صلوات الله علیهم یتوارثون بالانتقال والاتصال خلفًا عن سلف کما أنّ عرش الله حال لاتزول...

فلمّا انقطعت فی موسی وولده الذُرّیة کانت الحُجّة علیه قائمة أنّهم عریون من لباس تلک الرتبة السَنیّة لِأنّ النبی صلع قد قال انّی مخلف فیکم ما إن تمسکتم به لَنْ تضلّوا بعدی کتاب الله وعترتی اهل بیتی، فانّهما لن یفترقا حتّی یردّا علی الحوض، والحوض هو القائم صلوات الله علیه الذی لاتزال الامامة متّصلةً الیه، ولذلک یذکر انّ امیر المؤمنین یسقی أتباعه من أُمّة رسول الله صلع من ذلک الحوض یوم القیمة، وهو الذی یمتار کلّ ولی من علمه الحقیقی ویشفی اوامه وهو حوض النّبوة والرسالة والوصایة والامامة، ومجمع اهل الفضل الذین أتاهم الله الکرامة صاحب الحقائق والعلوم الباهرة الّتی تصیر بقیام ولاهل دَوره بعد انکتامها ظاهرة وهذه العلامات والاشارات ظهرت سفره فی ولاة الامر یتوارثها منهم خَلَف عن سَلفٍ بظهور المعجزات وکشف العلوم البیّنات واخراج المتّبعین الی النور من الظلمات

شهر سيفه في الحرم وقطع مناسك الحجّ وما أمر الله به فَظَفر به عدوّه وجعلوا
حبلاً في عنقه وأجروه في البلدان واطلعوه المنابر متبرّءًا من الامامة وشاهدًا
على نفسه بالخطاء في الجهر والاعلان، والامام لايتبرّء من كلمة الله وسرّه
بل يستسلم القتل كما فعل الحسين عليه السلام والصلوة، ويدخل كما فعل
الطاهرون من أولاده في كهف سَتْرِه،

وموسى فَلَم يجعله الصادق عليه السلام إلّا سِتْرًا على ولىّ الأمر لِيَنكتم
أمره عن الأضداد ولِأنّ لا يطّلع على ما خُصَّ به اهل العداوة والعناد، فادّعى
موسى الأمر له ولولده من بعده، وقالوا أنّ رسول الله صلع أشار الى المهدى الثانى
عشر من امير المؤمنين، فجعلوا جعفرًا عليه السلام السادس من على صلوات الله
عليه، وموسى أوّل السّتة الثانيه وأتوا بالاعتقادات الفاسدة والأقوال
الواهية فكذّبهم قول رسول الله صلع أنّ الشمس تطلع من مغربها وأنّها لا
تنكس رأية المهدى عليه السلام حين يقوم بها، فبان قوله وظهر أمره بولىّ
الأمر صاحب المعجزات ومبين الآيات المهدى بالله صلوات الله عليه الذى
طلع من المغرب، وقام قيام النبى صلع مُهْلِكًا لِمَن ناصَبَه الحرب وذهب الزَبَد
جفاءًا وأشرقت الارض بنور ربّها انارةً وضياءًا، وبطل ما مَوَّه به موسى وادّعاه
فظهر في الائمة من ذرّيّة اسماعيل عليه السلام نور الله،

وقد سئل مولانا المعزّ صلوات الله عليه عن الوَحْى فقال معناه الاشارة

فيها والشيعة في اعتقاداتهم مختلفون، والفضلاء البالغون منهم لولي أمرهم عارفون أعلمهم ولي الله بمقام صاحب أمرهم فعلموا وأمرهم أن يكتموا ذلك ستراً لخوف الضد فكتموا،

واعتقدت فرقة أن الامامة رجعت القهقرى، وفرقة تعتقد امامة موسى بن جعفر اذا أقام ولي الله ستراً على ولده إذ صار مستتراً، ثم اعتقدت فرقة أخرى امامة الأفلح (الأفطح) عبدالله بن جعفر، فمات في عصر ابيه وهو منقطع الولد فبطل ما الفقوه من التوهات، وفرقة اعتقدت امامة محمد بن جعفر، وتفرقوا بعد غيبة اسماعيل وذهب بهم اهوائهم كل يذهب الى الاباطيل، فلما آن للصادق عليه السلام الاجل وانقضى المهل لبّس على الضد ابى الدوانيق ستراً على ولي الله وصيانة لحدود دينه، واماناً عليهم من تتبعه لهم . . .

فقام موسى بن جعفر الرضى واعتكف أكثر الشيعة عليه، ومالت اهواء عامتهم اليه، وكل من أولاد جعفر إدّعى الامامة لنفسه، وانكتم ولي الله بهذا التلبيس عن الضد ومن اتبعه من أبناء جنسه، وكان أولاد جعفر قائمين بالشريعة والتأويل . . . وهم إلا من عصم الله منهم ممن عرف فضل ولي الله . . .

فبان خلو عبدالله عن الامامة لانبتار عقبه، ومحمد بن جعفر

فكان ما أظهره اسماعيل عليه أتمّ الصلوات من الغيبة والظهور بعد
ذلك كما فعل ذلك جدّه الناطق المرسَل محمد صلى الله عليه وعلى عقبه الأفضل
لِمَا ظهر للضدّ حين عاتب امير المؤمنين في اخذ حقّه ، ... فاظهر الامام
اسماعيل ما أظهره اعجازاً للخلائق بظهور القدرة من الله تعالى فيه وبقاء
الكَلِمة في عقبه الطاهرين من بيته لِأن تتمّ الحكمة وتتّصل الى الخلائق رحمةً
وتكمل الحجّة وتتمّ النعمة ،

ومثل هذه المعجزات العظيمة التي تقصر عن معرفتها العقول وتتيه
فيها مع السائل المسئول يظهرها العقل الأوّل الذي هو الابداع الأوّل بهم
لِتُظهرَ القدرة للعارفين ويبقى في تحيّرهم العادون لِأولياء الله من الضادين المخالفين
ولا يعقلها الا العالمون وَلَا يَنَالُ عهد الله إلى أولياء الظالمين ،

ثمّ إنّ الصّادق عليه السلام اقام موسى بن جعفر حجاباً على محمد بن
اسماعيل وعلى من جعله له باباً الذي هو ميمون الستر عليه والكفيل ، وكان موسى
دارساً في التأويل والحقيقة واجتمع عليه كثير من الشيعة المخالفين للطريقة
فقصدوا الاسم دُونَ المسمّى وقنعوا باللّفظ دون المعنى ، وكتم الصادق
منزلة ابن ابنه وأقام له ميمون القدّاح وابنه عبد الله بن الميمون كُفلاءَ وكتم
أمر ذلك عن الخاصّ والعامّ إلّا على المخلصين العارفين أوجب الله له الولاء ،
وسار ميمون وولده في طلب دار هجرة لولىّ الأمر ياويها ويُقيم الحد ودالهادين

الزمان ابی طالب صلوات الله علیه ، فاظهر اسماعیل مرضًا وصارت العوادُ من
اهل الحضر والسفار يعودونه ، وفی اثناء ذلك يستشهد ابوه مَن وصل اليه
علی ذلك ويكتب شهاداتهم ، فلمّا اظهر نقلته سجّاه ثلثة ايام وهو يأخذ علی
ذلك شهادة مَن وصل اليه يَعْزِيه فيه من بنی هاشم وغيرهم ، فلمّا كان فی
اليوم الثالث أمر بحمله الی القبر وكشف مِن وجهه وقال لِمَن حضر أليس
هذا ولدی اسماعيل ، فيقولون بلی ، فجدّد شهاداتهم علی ذلك ، ثمّ دفنه
وراح وكتب الی ابی الدوانيق يعرّفه خبره ، ووصل اليه اهل الاخبار بعلم
ذلك فسرّه وقطع خاطره عمّا كان ينويه ويضمره ...

فلمّا كان بعد ذلك ظَهَرَ اسماعيل عليه السلام بالبَصْرَة ، وأقبل اليه
الناس يهرعون وهم يقولون هذا اسماعيل بن جعفر عاد حيًّا ، الی أن مرّ بشيخٍ
زمنٍ علی دكانه من الشيعة الموالين لِاَبيه ، فقال له يا بن بنت رسول الله
خُذ بيَدی أخذ الله بِيَدك ، فطلع اليه ومسح علی ظُهره بيدهٔ المباركة فثبت ظهره
وبرء من علّته وشاهد الخلق ذلك ، وغاب عنهم ،

فلمّا سمع بذلك ابو الدوانيق قال إنّ سحر آل بنی ابی كبشة لَعظيم ،
فأمر بجعفر عليه السلام ، ولما وصل اليه عاتبه فی ذلك فاظهر الصادق ماكتبه
الشهود ، وكان فی المجلس كثير مِمّن شهد فشهدوا بذلك فسكن عنه غيظه
وراح الصادق ،

(٤) من الباب السابع عشر من كتاب زهر المعاني

... وقام اسماعيل بن جعفر صلوات الله عليه المبارك الميمون فى كنف ابيه، وهو سادس الائمة ممثول اللحم فى الروحانية مقابل الجدّ ونبىّ الهدى صلعم سادس النطقاء خاتم الانبياء وعلى امير المؤمنين الخلق الآخر والروح المنشئ المحرِّك المتحرِّك المحيي المنطق، كذلك اسماعيل ابن جعفر خاتم الأتماء والخلق الآخر ولده محمد صلع، قد كان ظهر شخصه وبان رسمه، وهو فى رتبة القائم السابع من النطقاء صلع روح الحيوة،

ولمّا آن لإسماعيل الأجلُ تلبيسًا على الضدّ لشدّة حسده وبغيه وحرصه فى إطفاء نور الله والله متمّ نوره بما فعله إن شاء الله، وأوصى اسماعيل والده الصّادق عم الأمين أنْ يُقيمَ لِولَدِه حُجُبًا ومُستَودَعًا كما أَوْصَى هارون موسى أنْ يُقيم لولده كفيلًا فأقام له يوشع بن النون سِترًا عليه وحجابًا له، فسلّمه، أعنى مولانا محمد بن اسماعيل، الى ميمون بن غيلان بن سعيد بن مهران بن سلمان الفارسى قدس الله روحه، فربّاه وأخفى شخصه صلع وهو ابن ثلث سنين مع ميمون القدّاح قدس الله روحه وهو كفيل له ومستودَع أمره، وميمون من أولاد سلمان وسلمان من أولاد اسحٰق بن يعقوب اهل الاستيداع والقائمين بالبلاغ والابلاغ،

وكان اسماعيل فى كنف ابيه كما كان محمد جدّه صلع فى كنف صاحب

ويولاكم أيها المؤمنون ، ويحمد الله ويشكره ويبكي من شدّة الفرح حتّى وصل الامام الى الفازة قد فرشت له فدخل وأمر بطلب اليسع ابن مدرار فخرجت العساكر في طلبه ، واقام صلوات الله عليه الى أن راح النهار فخرج الى المؤمنين وفرش له امام الفازة وحفوا به يستمعون قوله ويبكون ويحمدون الله على ما بلغهم ايّاه من رؤيته ، وهو في ذلك يثني عليهم ويذكر فضلهم وما اعدّ الله لهم من جزيل ثوابه ويعدهم بالفضل ويبشرهم بدرك نيل الدنيا والآخرة ، الى أنْ أذّن المؤذّنون بصلوة المغرب، فقام فصلّى بهم، فقرأ في الاولى بفاتحة الكتاب وسورة القدر وفي الثاني بفاتحة الكتاب وسورة قل هو الله احد ، واتم الصلوة ودخل الى الفازة وانصرف الناس ،

يؤمنه (من) جانبه ويتلطف له فيه ويذكر أنه إنما قدم لحاجة ولم يقدم
للحرب ووعده الجميل من نفسه والبرّ والإكرام وأكد ذلك له وبالغ فيه ،
فلما وصلت الرسل بكتابه اليه رمى به بعد أن علم ما فيه وأمر بقتلهم
فقتلوا، واتصل ذلك بابي عبد الله فعاوده ولاطفه خوفاً من أن يكون منه
الى المهدى ما يكرهه ، وأعرض له عن ذكره تقية عليه ، وكان آخراً مثل
ما كان أولاً ولج فى طغيانه فعاوده ثالثة فأصر وتمادى على غيه ،فاستعان
بالله وعبأ عساكره ، ودنا من المدينة ، فخرج إليه اليسع ابن مدرار بمن
معه فما لبث أن اقتحمته الخيل فى المدينة بعد أن ناوشها ساعة ،
وقتلوا من أصحابه جماعة ، وكان ذلك بقرب المساء فاختلط الظلام
ورجع العسكر فنزل حيث كان ، فلما جن الليل هرب ابن مدرار فى بنى عمه
واهل بيته ، وبات ابو عبد الله ومن معه تلك الليلة فى غم عظيم لا
يعلمون ما صنع بالمهدى ، ولم يمكنهم دخول المدينة فى الليل ، ولم
يعلموا بهرب الفاسق حتى أصبحوا فخرج اليهم وجوه اهل المدينة فاعلموهم
بذلك ودخلوا معهم الى المكان الذى كان فيه المهدى فاستخرجوه واستخرجوا
القائم ، فكانت فى الناس مسرة عظيمة استفزتهم وكادت تطيش لها
عقولهم وقرب لهما فرسان فركباهما وحف المؤمنون بهما والدعاة
يمشون حولهما وابو عبد الله يمشى بين يدى الامام ويقول هذا مولاى

۲۔ ذکر انصراف ابی عبد الله الی سجلماسة وخروج المهدی منها،

واذا قرب (ابو عبد الله) من سجلماسة وانتهی خبره الی أليسع ابن مدرار صاحب أمرها وأنّه اليه قصد، وقد کان زيادة الله کتب اليه بخبر المهدی ع م وصفته وأنّه الذی يدعو اليه ابو عبد الله، فلم يکن فی ذلك اليه مکروه، فلما قرب منه ابو عبد الله أرسل اليه فسأله عن نسبه وحاله وهل اليه قصد ابو عبد الله، فاعترف له ع م بالنسب اذ لم يسعه انکاره ولغز له فی ذکر ابی عبد الله فقال ما رأيته ولا أعرفه، وکذلك کان لم يره، وقد ذکرنا کيف کان ابتداء أمره، وقال له إنّما انا رجل تاجر وذلك أنّه خافه علی نفسه ورأی منه انکاراً القدوم الی ابی عبد الله وانفةً من دخول بلده فغلظ له فی القول فی ذلك فلزم کلامه الأوّل، فانزل الله له باکثر الهيبة فی قلبه والجلالة فی عينه فلم يمتحنه باکثر من أن جعله فی دارٍ وجعل عليه حرساً وجعل ابنه القائم بأمر الله کذلك فی دار اخری ليفرق بينهما ويختبر قول کلّ واحدٍ منهما، وکان قولهما واحداً، ... وامتحن رجالاً کانوا معهما بالعذاب ليقرّوا عليهما فلم يکن منهم الا ما قالاه،

واتصل الخبر بابی عبد الله فعظم ذلك عليه وکان يقول لمن يدعوه من الناس أنّ المهدی سيظهر الله امره يعزّ نصره،

وأرسل رُسُلاً من الخدم الی أليسع بن مدرار وکتب اليه کتاباً

الى مقدّم الرفقة فاقرأه سلامى وقل له قد قضينا صلوة عيدنا ونحن مسافرون وما قطعنا من طريقنا فهو خير، فإن رأيت ان ترحل بنا الساعة فافعل، وكان اليه محسناً يصله ويعطيه، فلمّا جاء رسوله إليه قال والله انّ هذا الشئ يشدّ على الناس ولكنّى ما أرى مراجعة ابى محمد فيما سأله، فضرب الطبل ورحل ورحل الناس، فلمّا كان من غدٍ وافى البريد من زيادة الله الى والى قسطيليّة بطلبه، فأصابه قد خرج من عمله، وحماه الله عزّ وجلّ منهم وصرف عنه بأسهم لما أراده الله من تمام أمره وبلوغ الكتاب الى اجله، فصار حتّى وصل الى سجلماسة فاقام بها، وكل ذلك تلحظه العيون فى طريقه وحيث ما نزل وفى اى مدينة دخل ويقول كل من رآه ممّن له تمييز وبصيرة والله ما هذا تاجر وما هذا الّا سلطان او ملك من الملوك، وكذلك كان يقول فيه كثير ممّن يراه من أهل سجلماسة، وكان ممّا يدلّ عليه افضاله على من يصحبه أو يأتيه وما انزل الله من المهابة والجلالة فى عين من رآه، وكان صاحب سجلماسة يومئذٍ اليسع بن مدرار وكان المهدى يصل ويهدى اليه وكان لذلك يوجب حقه وتعظيمه الى ان أتا كتاب زيادة الله لمّا اتّصل به مصيره اليه يخبر انه هو الذى يدعوا ابو عبد الله اليه، فغيّر ذلك منه عليه، وسنذكره اذا صرنا اليه إن شاء الله،

زكريا اخو ابي عبد الله، وكان فيمن قدم مع المهدى، فلما انتهى الى مدينة
طرابلس فرّق من كان معه عنه ورأى الناس أنهم كانوا أصحاباً وتجاراً، وقدم
ابو العبّاس الى القيروان ببعض ما كان معه وأمره أن يلحق به الى كتامة، وكان
قصدهم اليها، ومعه بعض الكتاميّين الذين كانوا ينفذون اليه، فلما وصل
ابو العبّاس الى القيروان اصاب الكتب قد سبقت الى زيادة الله بطلب المهدى
وصفته لما أفلتهم من مصر، فأمر زيادة الله فى السؤال عنه فاخبر بعض من
كان فى الرفقة معه أنّه تخلف بطرابلس، وذكروا أنّ ابا العبّاس من اصحابه
فأخذه وقرّره فأنكر وقال إنما أنا رجلٌ تاجرٌ فحُبِس واتّصل الخبر بالمهدى،
وهو بطرابلس، فصادفه رُفقة خارجة إلى قسطيليّة، فخرج فيها، وأتى
كتاب زيادة الله الى عامل طرابلس بطلبه وصفته وقد كان عم استعطفه
واهدى اليه، فكتب بأنّه قد خرج من عمله ونفذ الى ناحية قسطيليّة،
فوصل المهدى الى قسطيليّة فوافى بها عيدًا وكانت فى الرفقة التى هو فيها
رجال من بلدان المغرب والزاب وسجلماسة، فكان قصده الى ابي عبد الله،
فلمّا انتهى إليه أنّ اخا ابي عبد الله قد اعتقل وأنّه عُلِمَ أنّه مِن أصحابه
خاف أنْ قصد الى ابي عبد الله أن يتحقّق ذلك عليه فيُقتل، فترك القصد
الى ابي عبد الله وقصد الى سجلماسة، ولما شهد عم صلوة العيد بقسطيليّة
دعا بعض عبيده فقال له ويحك أنّ نفسي والله حدثتني أنّي مطلوبٌ فاذهب

LIX,16 مِنْكَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ ٱللَّهَ رَبَّ ٱلْعَالَمِينَ ، فحارب ابا القاسم وكانت له أُمور يطول ذكرها ، ومات على ذلك مِن غيّه وضلاله نعوذ بالله من الخذلان والضلالة والخسران ، واتّصل ما كان من ذلك بالامام ع م فكَرِه دخول اليمن على هذه الحال واقام مستترًا في زيّ التجار ، فأتت الكتب من بغداد الى صاحب مصر بصفته والأمر بطلبه والقبض عليه والى العامل بها ، وكان بعض اهل خاصّة ذلك العامل وليًّا مؤمنًا فأسرع الى المهدي ع م بالخبر وأمره بالتستّر ولطف في أمره الى أَنْ خرج مِن مصر ومعه ابنه القائم ع م وبعض عبيده ومعه اموال في الاحمال كثيرة ، فابتاع بها بضاعة وجعل الأموال معها في الاحمال وسار في رُفْقَة في زيّ التجار حتى انتهى الى الطاحونة فخرج على الرّفقة اللصوص فسلبوا كثيرًا من اهلها وذهب بعض ما كان للمهدي ع م فيها ، وكان اعظم ما ذهب له كتب كانت فيها علم من علوم الائمة صلوات الله عليهم ،

فلما خرج القائم بامر الله ع م الى مصر في الغَزْوَة الاولى التي غزاها اخذ الذين قطعوا على الرفقة يردّ ما انتهبوه واسترجع الكتب بعينها ، وكان المهدي يقول ، لولم تكُن هذه الغزوة الّا لردّ هذه الكتب لكان ذلك فتحًا عظيمًا ، وسرّ باسترجاعها سرورًا عجيبًا ،

وجُرِح يوم ذلك السلب مع المهدي ع م ابو العبّاس محمد بن احمد بن

(۳) من کتاب افتتاح الدعوة

۱. ذکر هجرة المهدی من دار قراره بالشرق ووصوله الی سجلماسة،

ولمّا انتهت الامامة الی المهدی ع م وقبض الامام قبله الذی کان
عهد فیها الیه وقد کان صلع یقول له إنّك ستهاجر بعدی هجرةً بعیدةً
وتلقی محنةً وشدةً، ولمّا قبضه الله وقام المهدی بالامامة من بعدہ اشتهر
ذکره وفشا خبره ودلّت علیه آیاته وتبیّنت للناس علاماته، وخاف المهدی
بنی العبّاس علی نفسه وکان له فی ذلك اخبار یطول شرحها وذکرها ونحن کما
وعده الامام من قبله صلع بها، فخرج بنفسه وبالامام ابنه القائم من بعدہ
معه وهو یومئذٍ غلام حدث السنّ، والمهدی صلع شابّ عندما کمل حتی
انتهی مصر وامل أن یقصد الی الیمن، وکان تقدّم بعض دعاته فقصد الیمن
قبله وفسد أمره فاتی الی ابی القاسم صاحب دعوة الیمن فأراد أنْ یستزلّه
فوجده ثابتًا فی أمره، فانصرف عنه الی علی ابن الفضل صاحبه، وکان فی ناحیة
من الیمن فاستماله وأفسده، فکان یُقال فی ذلك الوقت أتی عراقیٌّ الی عراقیٍّ
یطلب أن یَسْحَرَ منه فلم یمکنه ذلك، فأتی الیمانی فسحرمنه م فانسلخ علی ابن
الفضل من أمر الله وأمر أولیائه واستحلّ المحارم ورفض الظاهر ودعا الناس
الی الاباحات، فلمّا اشتهر بذلك تبرّأ منه ذلك الذی أفسده، فکان کما
قال من شأن ابلیس اللعین إِذْ قَالَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ اكْفُرْ فَلَمَّا كَفَرَ قَالَ إِنِّي بَرِيءٌ

العالم علمه، ونحن نكتفي بما أوضحناه ونستغني بما شرحناه فمن اهتدى فَإِنَّمَا
يَهْتَدِي لِنَفْسِهِ، وَمَنْ ضَلَّ فَإِنَّمَا يَضِلُّ عليها، وَمَا أنت (أنا) عَلَيْهِم X,108
بِوَكِيلٍ، قُلْ هٰذِهِ سَبِيلِي أَدْعُو إِلَى ٱللَّهِ عَلَى بَصِيرَةٍ أَنَا وَمَنِ ٱتَّبَعَنِي،
وَسُبْحَانَ ٱللَّهِ، وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ ٱلْمُشْرِكِينَ، فَإِن تَوَلَّوْا فَقُلْ حَسْبِيَ ٱللَّهُ XII,108
لَا إِلٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَهُوَ رَبُّ ٱلْعَرْشِ ٱلْعَظِيمِ، IX,130

ما ورد عليها وقيام الأدلّة المتظاهرة والبراهين الباهرة على صحّة ذلك بما تقدّم ذكره من هذه القصص المتقدّم ذكرها،

وأوصى الى ابن عمّه وليّ عهد المسلمين كما فعل من تقدم من آبائه صلوات الله عليهم اجمعين واستودعه لولده الذى نصّ عليه واقامه بين يديه واستكفله ايّاه كالقصّة المشروحة فيما تقدّم به القول، فأوصى الى ابن عمّه الملقّب بولى عهد المسلمين بمثل ما كان اوصى من قبله الى اوصيائهم،

فنقول انّ ولى عهد المسلمين الامير ابا القاسم ابن الامام المستنصر بالله امير المؤمنين وصى مستحقّ بما استحقّه وصىّ اسماعيل المكنّى بالكبش، لما استحقّه وصى هارون المكنّى عنه بالبقرة، ولما استحقّه محمد بن على المعروف بابن الحنفيّة وصىّ الحسين، ولما استحقّه وصى اسماعيل بن جعفر المعروف بالقدّاح، ولما استحقه سعيد الخير الملقّب بالمهدى المكنّى عنه الشمس الطالعة، وإنّ حبل الامامة متّصل لا ينقطع وواجب لا يندفع، وأوّل الائمة آخرهم وآخرهم أوّلهم،

وقد أوضحنا لمن كان اخانا حقًّا بما هو الحقيقة وما يلقها الّا الّذين صبروا وما يلقها الّا ذو حظٍّ عظيم، وهذا ما وعدنا بكشفه وايضاحه، ولولا ما عليه حال الاخوان من اختلاف الأهواء وخبط العشواء لما كشفنا شيئًا كما كشفناه، ولكن قد روى عن رسول الله صلعم أنّه قال اذا ظهرت البدع فى أُمّتى فليُظهر

اظهر الله به دعوة الحق وكان على يديه طلوع الشمس،

وذلك إنّه لما اظهر النور باليمن وبلاد المغرب سار ولى الله فى ارضه على بن الحسين صلوات الله عليه يريد بلاد المغرب حتّى كان فى بعض طريقه فاظهر الغيبة واستخلف حجّته سعيد الملقّب بالمهدى سلام الله عليه فثبت قواعد الدعوة وجرى عليهما من ضدّهما بسجلماسة من العمال بالمغرب ماجرى، ووقى الله وليّه سلام الله عليه كيده لمّا كان من زحف ابى عبد الله عليه وظفره واستخراجه ولىّ الله سلام الله عليه من سجنه،

فلما حضرت للمهدى النقلة سلّم الوديعة الى مستقرّها وتسلّمها محمد بن على القائم بأمر الله تعالى وجرت الامامة فى عقبه سلام الله عليه حتّى انتهت الامامة الى مستقرّها ومعدنها واطمأنّت بموضعها من الامام المنصور ابى على الآمر باحكام الله امير المؤمنين بالنصّ عليه كما قدّمنا فى هذا الباب، فقام صلوات الله عليه بالامامة وولى الأمر بنفسه وظهر فيه، ثم إنّه لما أراد اظهار الغيبة بما اظهرها به قدّم النصّ قبل ذلك وأمر باشاعته فى كافة الجزائر، ووردت بذلك أوامر العالية القاهرة فى سجلاته الموضوعة عليها العلامة الشريفة بخطّ اليد العالية الى حجّته ووليّه المنصوبة بجزيرتنا من قبل آبائه الائمة الطاهرين سلام الله عليهم اجمعين بسماع منّا ووقوف بين يديها وايضاحها ذلك لنا وشهادتها بصحّة

والقرطاس الأبيض إشارةً الى خُلُوّه مِن الامامة وكان المودع هو المسلّم وما يَعْقِلها الّا العالمون، وذلك ما رُوِيَ عن الامام جعفر ابن محمّد الصادق عليه السّلام المصدّق الامين في تسليمه الأمر الى ولده اسماعيل ابن جعفر، وغيبة اسماعيل وولدُه محمد بن اسماعيل في حدّ الطفولية ، ولم تكُن الامامة ترجع القهقري منه كما لم ترجع من غيره، فأودع حجّته المنصوبة بين يديه مقامه لولده وأقامه سِتْرًا عليه وقدّمه بين يديه واستكفله ايّاه الى بلوغه أشدّه سلام الله عليه ، فلمّا بلغ أشدّه تسلّم وديعته، ثم جرى الأمر في عقبه خلفًا عن سلف حتى انتهى الأمر به الى على بن الحسين بن احمد بن عبد الله بن محمد بن اسماعيل صلوات الله عليهم اجمعين ،

فكان من أمره ما كان مِن ارساله دُعاته الحسين بن فرح بن حَوْشَب المعروف بالمنصور، وإنّما لقب بذلك لمّا افتتح له من النصر باليمن، فدخل اليَمَن وكان مِن أمره ما ضمنَتْه سيرته، وكان بمثابة الفجر المتنفّس وبه كشف الله عزّ وجلّ عن الأولياء الغمّه وانار حنادس الظلمة قدّس الله روحه ورزّقنا شفاعته ، ثم اتّصل ابو عبد الله صاحب الدعوة المغرب عن أمر امامه على ابن الحسين، فأقام عنده في اليمن وشهد معه وقائع كثيرةً وجاهد بين يديه ، ثمّ بعثه من ارض اليمن الى ارض المغرب، فشخص اليها وكان مِن خبره في طريقه ما ضمنه كتاب افتتاح الدعوة بالمغرب (و)

(٢) من الباب الرابع من كتاب غاية المواليد

... وقام امير المؤمنين بالرتبتين حتّى حضرته غيبة فاظهرها فنصّ برتبة النبوّة على ولده الحسن وبرتبة الامامة على ولده الحسين، وعهد الى الحسن عند حضور نقلته بِأنْ يسلّم الرتبة الى اخيه الحسين بعد تقدّم النصّ عليهما من جدّهما بقوله الحسن والحسين امامان قاما او قعدا وابوهما خير منهما،

فلما قضي الحسن نحبه سلّم الى اخيه الحسين فاجتمعت الرتبتان في الحسين وقام بهما حتّى اظهر الغيبة على القضية المعلومة كما اظهرها ابوه، وولده على ابن الحسين في حدّ الطفولية، فأودع له أخاه محمّدا بن حنفيّة واستكفله ايّاه وأوصى اليه أنْ يسلّم اليه وديعته عند بلوغه اشدّه، فقام محمد بن على المعروف بابن الحنفيّة بأمر الله وبثّ دعاته وأقام دعوته الى أن أتاه على ابن الحسين فطلب تسليم وديعته، فقال له ما هو لك المودع عِندى، فقال هى قارورة مختومة فيها قرطاس أبيض وهى فارغة ليس فيها غيره، فعند ذلك جمع محمد بن على الدعاة والنقباء وسلّم اليه بحضرتهم وأخرج القارورة وفتحها على بن الحسين بحضور مَن حضره فلم يكن فيها غير القرطاس الأبيض، فكانت تلك بعض آياته التى اظهرها ليقع الاقرار به والتصديق، وكان ايداع الحسين ابن على سلام الله عليه القارورة الفارغة

السيرة ، ولما ثار مُدْلِج على زيادة الله اخرج اهل السجن فخرج وتوجه راجعًا
الى المشرق فلحقه زيادة الله فى وقت هروبه بطرابلس وقبض عليه ، ثم
خذاه ، ولمّا اجتمع مع ابى عبد الله احدث نفاقًا واستفسد رجال الدولة
بعد أن صار المهدى الى افريقيّة ووسوس الى اخيه ابى عبد الله واستفسد
وأراد أن يكون الأمر والنهى والاصدار والايراد لهما دون المهدى وأن
يكون المهدى كالمولى عليه معهما ،

الحرس عليه واقصاه واظهر جفوته ، فلمّا قرب ابو عبد الله منه كتب بخبره فأتته
اليه جاءَ ويسأله ترك التعرّض له ويعده بالجميل ، فقتل رُسُل ابي عبد الله ومزق
كتابه واظهر الغضب والانفة ممّا كتب به اليه وغل الله يده عن وليه وقصرها
عن أن يناله بمكروه حتى نزل ابو عبد الله عليه بسجلماسة ، وخرج بجموعه اليه
وحاربه ، فغلب ابو عبد الله عليه وولى هاربًا وأُدرك فأُتي به اليه بعد أن خرج
المهدى وتلقاه أوليائه ، وامر بقتل الفاسق ابن مدرار ، وكان فى كف يده
عنه وهو فى حوزته ، وقد اصر على ما اصر عليه لشقوته آية وعبرة وبرهان
للمهدى ،

وقد كان ابو عبد الله يقول لاصحابه الذين استجابوا الدعوته أنّ الله
سبحانه يحفظ المهدى ويقيه ويدفع عنه حتى يظهره ويعزّ نصره ، فلمّا رأوا
ذلك قويت بصائرهم وخصلت نياتهم ،

وكان ابو العباس اخو ابي عبد الله اكبر منه وأخلص بالولاية قديمًا قد
قدم مع المهدى أن يقصد قصد ابي عبد الله ، ورأى أن يعرفه ذلك وظهر
ابو العباس بالقيروان وعلم أنّه اخو ابي عبد الله وبأنه قدم مع المهدى فعاقبه
ذلك واخرج الى جهة قسطنطينة ، فلم ير المهدى قصده الى ابي عبد الله
خوفًا على ابي العباس أنْ يُعلم بالحقيقة امرُه فيقتل ، فحمل نفسه على المكروه
وسار الى سجلماسة وكتب الى ابي عبد الله بذلك ، وكان ابو العباس ردى

وكان كلما حلّ ببلد افضل على العامل عليه واوصله واهدى اليه، فمنهم مَن لم يعرفه واكرمه لذلك ومنهم من عرفه وترك التعرّض له لِما كان منه اليهُ ومنهم من عرفه ذلك وحذره واخبارهم بذلك مما يطول ذكره، وذلك كله لِما ألقاه الله فى قلوبهم له حتى اذا حل سجلماسة عامل ابن مِدْرار سلطانها بذلك، وكان يخصّه ويكرمه ويوجب حقّه الى أن وصلت رُسُل صاحب بغداد وصاحب افريقية اليه واتصلت الاخبار من جهات كثيرة بانّ هو الذى يدعو اليه ابو عبد الله، وأمِرَ بالقبض عليه وحذر من أن يفوته او أن يداهن فى أمره، فسأله عن نفسه فعرفه أنّه من ولد الحسين صلعم لصلبهُ فقال ولِمَ لَمْ تعرفنا بذلك قبل هذا، فقال ما كان لى من حاجة الى ذكره ولا سألتنى عنه، واذا قد سألتنى عنه لم يسعْنى أن انتفى من نسبتى ولا أن اكتمه فاطّلعتك على ما سألتنى عنه، فقال له فهذا الرجل الذى ظهر ببلد كتامة وغلب على نواحى افريقية أإلَيْكَ يدعو، فقال ما رأيت هذا الرجل ولا أعرفه، وكذلك كان لم يكن صلع رآه كما ذُكِرَ وكما قد قدّمنا الخبر بذلك، قال ولكنّه بلغنى أنّه يدعو الى الرضى من آل محمّد، قال فانّه قد اخذ بافريقية واقبل بعساكره الينا وما يدعو إلّا اليك، قال اهل النسب بالمغرب كثير فإنْ كان يدعوا لىَ نفعتك عنده ولم اضرّك، فإنْ كان الى غيرى لم يكُنْ علىّ فى ذلك مقالٌ فحرم الشقى حظّه منه وغلبت الشقوة عليه، واختطفه وجعل

ومنا الهادى ومنا المهدى ومنا المهتدى ومنا من يُهتدَى به ومنا من تغرب الشمس على رأسه وتطلع من مغربها، نحن ثُلّة الله، منّا اسد الله ونحن خزان الله، يا ثابت ما نحن خزانة على ذهب ولا فضّة ولكن على المكنون من علمه، نحن دعائم الله، نحن ذخيرة الله ورسوله ابونا الاكبر وعلىّ ابونا الاصغر وفاطمة أُمّنا وخديجة بنت خويلد والدتنا، وجعفر الطّيار فى الجنّة عمنا وحمزة سيّد الشهداء عم ابينا، فمن زاله (من آله ؟) حسب كحسبنا ونسب كنسبنا استودعنا الله سره وائتمننا على وَحْيه وعلمه وأنطقنا بحكمته فهذه حالنا عنده،

فالذين سمّاهم ائمة منهم قد مضى ومنهم من يأتى كَنّى عنهم لصفاتهم وافعالهم، وقوله نحن ثُلّة الله، الثلة فى لغة العرب الجماعة، ويقال الخاصّة الرجل جماعته يعنى انهم اهل الخاصة عند الله تعالى الذين اختصهم بفضله،

(٤٩) وعن ابى جعفر محمد ابن على أنّه قال اذا قام قائم آل محمد اوتِىَ عصى موسى واخرج التورٰية من أنطاكيّة، ونزع الله الرعب من قلوب شيعته والقى فى قلوب عدوّهم حتّى يكون قلوبهم كزُبَر الحديد، وحتّى يدعو بالرجل فيضرب عنقه، فيقال فيما قتلته فلا يكون قتله الّا بعمله،

ومن الجزء الخامس عشر من كتاب شرح الاخبار ايضًا

... وأعمَى الله عيونهم عنه ووقاه وسلّمه الى ان حلّ مدينة سجلماسة

وهذا أيضًا مما انتهى اليه من رسول الله صلع على بحق ما قدّمنا،

(٤٦) وعن الدعشى يرفعه الى رسول الله صلع أنّه قال يخرج بعدى من بنى هاشم رجل يُبايع بين الرُكن والمقام، فيغلب صاحب الشام اربعة آلاف يخسف لهم البيداء، ثم يسير اليهم والمحروم من حرم غنيمتهم، ثم يملك بعد ذلك سبع سنين،

فهذا ممّا ينتظر ويكون ويبايع الناس الامام يومئذ بين الركن والمقام، ويهلك الله تعالى عدوّه كما وعد بذلك على لسان نبيه بحوله وقوته،

(٤٧) وعنه يرفعه الى عبد الله بن مسعود أنّه قال بينا النبى صلع جالس فى جماعة من اصحابه اذ مَرّ به فِتْيَة من قريش فتغيّر وجهه، فقال له بعضُ مَن حضره يا رسول الله قد سائنا ما رأينا فى وجهك، فقال إنّ اهل بيتى اختار الله لهم الآخرة على الدنيا وسَيُصيبهم بعدى تطريدٌ وبلاء وتشريد حتّى يخرج قوم من هَهُنَا، وَاَوْمَى الى جهة المشرق، ومعهم رأيات سود يسئلون الحق فلا يعطونه، ثم يدفعونها الى رجلٍ من اهل بيتى فيملأها عدلاً،

(٤٨) (ومن) صفوان الجمّال قال قلت يومًا لابى عبد الله جعفر ابن محمد عم وانا عنده، يابن رسول الله صلع أمنكم السّفاح، فأطرق الى الارض مليًا، ثم قال ياثابت منّا السّفاح ومِنّا النفّاخ ومنا الصدّيق ومنا الفاروق،

وقوله صوب الغمام، الصوب المطر والغمام السحاب الرقيق،

(٤٢) وعن على ابن الحسين ع م أنه قال يقوم القائم مِنّا (يعنى المهدى) ثم يكون بعده اثنا عشر مهديًا (يعنى مِن الائمة مِن ذرّيته)،

(٤٣) وعن ابى الحارّ بلال بن فروة يرفعه (الى النبى؟) أنّه قال لَن تهلك هذه الاُمّة حتّى يليها اثنا عشر خليفة كلّهم من اهل النبى صلع كلهم يعمل بالحقّ ودين الهُدى، منهم رجلان يملك احدهما اربعين سنة والآخر ثلثين سنة، وهذا مثل الحديث الذى قبله،

(٤٤) ومن رواية يحيى بن السلام يرفعه الى عبد الله بن عمر أنّه قال ابشروا فيوشك أيام الجبّارين أن تنقطع، ثم يكون بعدهم الجبّار الذى يجبّر الله به اُمّة محمّد صلع المهدى، ثم المنصور، ثم عدد ائمة مهديين،

فهذا ممّا لم يقُلْه عبد الله الاممّا سمعه عن رسول الله صلع او بلغه عنه لِأنّ ذلك من اخبار ما يكون ولا يقول ذلك الّا من جاء فيه علم من عند الله تعالى، وقد كان المهدى والمنصور ع م و(من) كان بعدهما ويكون كذلك ائمة مهديون، وينجز الله لهم ما وعدهم فى كتابه وعلى لسان رسوله بحوله وقوّته،

(٤٥) ومن رواية الدعشى يرفعه الى ابى الحارّ (الجارود؟) أنّه قال يكون المهدى وسبعة من بعده يعنى من ولده كلّهم صالح لم يروا مثلهم،

يعطه أحد قبله ولا يعطه أحد بعده، اسمه اسم نبي يملأ الارض عدلاً كما ملئت ظلماً وجوراً،

فهذا مما ذكرنا انه يكون لبعض الائمة من آل محمد صلع من ولد المهدى، وينسب ذلك اليه لأنّه اول قائم منهم ومفتاح أمرهم،

(٤٠) وممّا رواه ونسخة يرفعه الى رسول الله صلع أنّه قال انّى رأيت بنى أميّة على منابر الارض وسيملكونكم فتجدونهم أرباب سوءٍ فانتظروا اختلاف سفهائهم، فاذا اختلف سفهائهم ارتدّوا على أعقابهم لا يرتقون فتقاً الا فتق الله عليهم أعظم منه حتى يخرج مهدينا،

واهتمّ رسول الله بالرؤيا التى رآها فانزل الله عليه، وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الرُّؤْيَا الَّتِي أَرَيْنَاكَ إِلَّا فِتْنَةً لِلنَّاسِ وَالشَّجَرَةَ الْمَلْعُونَةَ فِي الْقُرْآنِ، XVII, 62 فقوله أنّ بنى أميّة لا يزالون يملكون حتى يختلف سفهائهم فاذا اختلفوا ارتدّوا على أعقابهم حتى يخرج المهدى هو فيما قدّمنا ذكره يعنى يخرج المهدى خروج من يملك الأرض من ذرّيّته وبنى اميّة وانّ انقطع ملكهم من المشرق وبقيت لهم بقية المغرب بجزيرة الأندلس، وسيكون أمرهم على ما وصفه رسول الله صلع وينجز الله ما وعده فى كتابه المبين من إيراث الأرض عباده الصالحين،

وقوله لا يرتقون فتقاً الا فتق الله عليهم اعظم منه، الرتق الحام

بالعافية بالعلل فاحمدوه، وان ابتليتم فاصبروا، فانّ العاقبة للمتقين، فوالذي فلق الحبّة وبرئ النسمة لولم يبق من الدنيا إلّا يوم واحد لبعث الله لهم من يسقيهم كأساً مصبرةً حتى يتمنوا أن أكون فيهم فاشفع لهم عنده وحتّى يقول القائل من قريش لوكان هذا من قريش لرحمنا،

قوله. حبالة عصفور، الحبالة الشرك الذى يُصاد به الطائر وغيره من الصيد، وقوله ان هولاء القوم سيدلّون عليكم يعنى بنواُميّة وبنوالعبّاس يدالّون لتكون لهم الدولة، والباكى على دينه لما يرآه قد انتقص فيهم، والباكى على دنياه هو لما يظلمونه فيه، ويأخذون منها من يديه،

(٣٨) وروى عن جعفر بن محمد ع م عن ابيه عن جدّه على ابن الحسين ع م أنّه سُئل عن المهدى، فقال هو من ولدى،

(٣٩) وروى شريك بن عبد الله عن جابر الجُعْفى عن ابى جعفر محمد ابن على ابن الحسين ع م أنّه قال اذا قام قائمنا اهل البيت قسم بالسوية وعدل فى خلق الرحمان البرّ منهم والفاجر منهم، من اطاعه اطاع الله ومن عصاه عصى الله، ويستخرج التوراية والإنجيل وسائر كتب الله بأنطاكيّة، فيحكم بين أهل التوراية بتوراتهم وبين اهل الانجيل بإنجيلهم وبين اهل القرآن بقرآنهم، وتخرج الأرض كنوزها من الذهب والفضّة، فيقول ايها الناس هلموا (هَلُمّ) فَخُذُوا ما سفكتم فيه الدماء وقطعتم فيه الارحام، ويعطى مالم

ولد فاطمة يقوم من المغرب فيكسر شوكة المبتدعين، ويقتل الظالمين،

وكذلك قام المهدى ع م من الغرب وهو من ولد فاطمة، ولما جاءت به الروايات من هذا خاف بنو العباس من ادريس بن الحسين لمّا صار الى المغرب واحتالوا في أن سمّوه، وقد ذكرت خبره فيما مضى، وكانوا في ذلك كما قال الله تعالى يُرِيدُونَ لِيُطْفِئُوا نُورَ ٱللّٰهِ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ، وَٱللّٰهُ مُتِمُّ نُورِهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ ٱلْكَافِرُونَ، LXI, 8

(۳۷) حبيب بن ابى ثابت عن ابن ادريس قال كنت قاعدًا فى حلقة المسجد فيها المسيّب فسمعته يقول سمعت عليًّا ع م يقول ألا أخبركم عن اهل بيتى، اما عبد الله بن جعفر فصاحب لهم، واما الحسن بن على فصاحب جفنةٍ وخوانٍ ولو قد التقت بحلف البطان لم يغن عنكم فى الحرب حبالة عصفور، واما ابن عباس فلا يقرأكم، واما انا والحسين فنحن منكم وأنتم منّا وإنّ هؤلاء القوم سيدلّون عليكم بمعصيتكم امامكم فى الحقّ وبطاعتهم امامهم فى الباطل وبفسادكم فى ارضكم وصلاحهم فى أرضهم، ويطول دولتهم عليكم حتّى لا يبق منكم إلّا نافع او غير ضارّ، حتّى يكون نُصرتكم منهم نصرة العبد من سيّده، اذا رآه اطاعه واذا غاب عنه شتمه، وحتّى يكون الناس باكين باكٍ يبكى على دينه وباكٍ يبكى على دنياه، وحتّى لا يدعوا لله حرمةً إلّا استحلوها، وحتّى يدخل ظلمهم كلّ بيت شعرٍ ومدرٍ، فإن أتاكم الله

الله تعالى هو الذى ارسل رسوله بالهُدى ودين الحق لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ IX, 33
بعض الائمة من ولده كما تقدّم ذكر ذلك وبيانه فى هذا الخبر وفيما جاء قبله
وينسب ذلك اليه ع م اذ كان اول من قام بذلك وسَنَّهٔ وأَصّلَه،

(۳۴) ومن حديث عبد الرزّاق عن معمر بن سعيد بن ابى عروفة
عن قتاده قال قلت لسعيد المهدى حقٌّ قال حق، قلت مِمَّن، قال من قريش،
قلت من ايّ قريش، قال من هاشم، قلت من ايّ هاشم؟ قال من بنى عبد المطّلب،
قلت من ايّ بنى عبد المطّلب، قال من ولد فاطمة،

ولو سأله من ايّ ولد فاطمة، هو لَأَخبره من ولد الحسين لِأنّه
قد روى ذلك، وسنذكره، ولم يقُل سعيد هذا برأيه ولكنّه سماع سمعه،

(۳۵) وروى ابو المليح عن زياد بن بشّار عن ابن نُفيل عن سعيد
بن المسيّب عن اُمّ سلمة أنّها قالت، سمعت رسول الله صلع يقول المهدى
مِن عترتى من ولد فاطمة ابنتى،

فما جاء فيما تقدّم ذكره مِن أنّ المهدى من قريش ومن بنى هاشم، فانما
روى ذلك على مثل ما جاء الخبر فيه عن سعيد بن المسيّب، ولم يسئل السائل
من رَوى ذلك له عمّا بعد، ولو سأل عن ذلك لاوقف عليه، وسنذكر بعد
هذا من أوقف عليه النصّ إن شاء الله،

(۳۶) وروى زادان عن سلمان الفارسى، أنّه قال لاتُدّم. بقائم من

قد ندّ واشتدّ عَدْوًا وهو يحرك ذنبه، والحصحصة فى اللغة الحركة فى الشئ
حتى يستقرّ، والحصق (الحصحصة؟) أيضًا السرعة فى العدو،

(٣٢) وعنه عم أنّه قال والذى فلق الحبة وبرء النَّسَمَة لو لم يبق
من الدنيا غير يوم واحد لطوّل الله ذلك اليوم حتّى يملك فيه رجل منّى،
فاذا رأيتم ذلك اليوم لم يرم رامٍ بسهمٍ ولا بحجرٍ ولا يطعن برمح فاحمدوا
الله، فان ابتليتم فاصبروا، فان العاقبة للمتقين،

فهذا ممّا تقدّم القول فيه أنّه يكون من ذرّية المهدى عم
فى الأئمة مَن يجمع الله العباد على طاعته وتقطع الحرب ويكون الدين
كله لله كما اخبر تعالى وَيُظْهِرُ دِينَهُ عَلَى ٱلدِّينِ كُلِّهِ، IX, 33

(٣٣) ومن رواية مخنف ابن عبد الله باسناده عن رسول الله عم
قال المهدى من نسل فاطمة سيّدة نساء العالمين، طالت الأيام أم قصرت
يخرج فيملأ الارض قسطًا وعدلًا كما ملئت جورًا وظلمًا، ويطيب العيش فى
زمانه ويصيح صائح بلعنة بني أُميّة وشيعتهم والصلوة على محمد والبركة
عَلَى علىّ وشيعته، فيومئذ يؤمن الناس كلّهم اجمعون،

فهذا ما ذكرنا أنّه يكون لبعض الائمة من نسل المهدى وينسب اليه
لأنّه سببه ومفتاحه، وأوّل من قام من آل محمد كما يكون ذلك ايضًا ينسب
الى رسول الله صلع لأنّه نبي الأُمّة وصاحب الشريعة والملّة، وقد قال

هذا لثلا يحمله من لم يتّسِعْ في العلم على العموم اذا سمعه، وقوله لا بُدَّ مِن رحى
سلطان يقوم يعني ما يدور عليه امره والرحى يضرب مثلاً لذلك وللحرب يقال
دار رحا (رحى) الحرب الى حومته ورحى الموت الى موقعه، قال الشاعر

والناس في غفلا تهم ورحى المنية تطحن

وقال ان لَطحنها رؤفًا، الرؤف القرن شبه حدثها بحدّة القرن، وعلى الله
فكّها يقول أنّ الله سيفكّ ذلك الحدّ، وقوله ألا أنَّ أطائب ارومتي ء
الارومة اصل الشجرة واصل الخشب، يعني بارومته اياه وبعترته ولده
وولد ولده، وقد شرحنا ذلك فيما تقدّم، وعنى بالخليفة الذي استخلفه
الناس، فسن ذلك لمن بعده، فقتلوا فروخ آل محمد يعني من قتل من ذرّيته عم،
والخَلَف الذرّية الصالحة بفتح اللام، والخلف بجزم اللام الذرّية السوء،
وقال الله تعالى فَخَلَفَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ خَلْفٌ أَضَاعُوا الصَّلٰوةَ وَاتَّبَعُوا الشَّهَوَاتِ XIX, 60

(۳۰) ومن رواية ابن غسّان باسناده عن علي ع م أنّه قال يخرج
مِنّا رجلان احدهما من الآخر يقال لاحدهما المهدي وللآخر المرضى،

فالمهدي ع م قد كان والمرضى يكون من ذرّيته كما قال علي ع م أنّه مِنْهُ

(۳۱) وفي رواية اخرى عن علي ع م انه قال كأنّي انظر الى دينكم موليا
يحصحص بذنبه ليس بأيديكم منه شئ حتّي يرده الله عليكم برجل منّا،

قوله يحصحص بذنبه شبه الدين اذا ذهب من أيدي الناس ببعير

الرجال سَعَتَه ، ورجلاً هو كأحدكم أتاه الله سلطاناً فقال من اطاعني فقد اطاع

الله ومن عصاني فقد عصى الله ، وكذب ليس لمخلوق طاعة في معصية الخالق

الّا وانّه لابُدَّ من رحى سلطان يقوم على ضلاله ، فاذا قامت طحنت وإن

لطحنها رؤفا وان رؤفها حدّتها ، وعلى الله فكّها الّا وإنّ اطائب ارومتى

وابرار عترتى احكم الناس صغاراً وأعلم الناس كباراً بنا يبتر الله الزمان الكدى

وبنا يبتر الكذب ، وانا أهل بيت ، من حكم الله حكمنا ، ومن قول صدق

سمعنا ، فإن تتبعوا آثارنا تهدوا ببصائرنا وإن تحيدوا عنّا تهلكوا بأيدينا

اوماشاء الله ، ويح للفروخ فروخ آل محمد من خليفة غير مستخلف يقتل خَلَفي

وخَلَف الخَلَف ، والله لولم يبق من الدنيا الّا يوم واحد لطوّله الله حتى يخرج منّا

رجل يقال له المهدي يملئها قسطاً وعدلاً كما ملئت جوراً وظلماً ،

قوله أمطّها يقول أمدّها اى اتبعها باخرى يقال من ذلك تكلم فمطّ

حاجته اى مدّه ، قوله وهو رجل هو كأحدكم آتاه الله سلطاناً ، فقال من اطاعني

فقد اطاع الله الخ يعني من وصف المتغلبين سلطان الدنيا يبين بذلك ، قوله

رجل هو كأحدكم يعني من سائر الناس يدّعى أنّ مَن اطاعه اطاع الله ومن عصاه

عصى الله وكذب ولم يقل أنّه نبي ولا امام ، وامّا أنبياء الله وائمة دينه فمن

اطاعهم فقد اطاع الله ومن عصاهم فقد عصى الله لقوله تعالى مَنْ يُطِعِ ٱلرَّسُولَ IV,82

فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ الله وقوله أَطِيعُوا ٱللّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا ٱلرَّسُولَ وَأُولِى ٱلْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ وشرحنا IV,62

بعده بالائمة من ولده وينسب ذلك اليه اذكان ابتدائه ومفتاحه وسببه
وأول قائم به ،

(٢٨) سمعت الامام المعز لدين الله ع م يحدث عما كان من أمر
المهدى وقول بعض شيوخ الأولياء يا مولانا أأنت المهدى المنتظر الذى يجمع
الله لك العباد ويملكك الارض، ويكون لك الدين واحدًا، فقال له المهدى ع م
فضل الله تعالى كثير واسع ولنا منه قسم جزيل ولمن يأتى من بعدنا فضله
ولو كان الفضل لواحد لما وصل الينا منه شئ، ثم قال المعز كان المهدى مفتاح
قفل الفضل والرحمة والبركات والنعمة به فتح الله تعالى ذلك للعباد وذلك
يتصل عنه من ذريته حتى يتم لهم وعد الله الذى وعدهم اياه بفضله
وقوته وحوله، وقول على ع م ليخرجن الاسلام نادًا من أيدى الناس
فالندود الشرود يقال منه ندّ البعير اذا شرد واستقصى وهو نادّ اذا فعل
ذلك ،

(٢٩) ومن رواية ابن غسان باسناده عن على ع م أنه قال احذروا
على دينكم ثلثا رجلًا اتاه الله القرآن وكان يدين الاسلام غير ذلك مما لله ،
ثم انسلخ ونبذه وراء ظهره وسل سيفه على جاره ورماه بالاشراك ، قالوا
يا امير المؤمنين فايهما أولى بها، قال الرامى، ورجلًا استخفته الأحاديث
فكلما وضع احدوثة كذب ، وانقطعت أمطها بأطول منها أن يدارك

وتستنفذ كذلك الائمة من ذريّته مَن بقى منهم حتى ينجز الله وعده لأوليائه وعباده المؤمنين ويحقّ وعيده على أعدائه الكافرين ويكون الدين كلّه كما قال فالسعيد كل السعيد مَن صبر لذلك واخلص وانتظر، كما قال وهو اصدق القائلين، ﴿فَٱنتَظِرُوا إِنِّي مَعَكُم مِّنَ ٱلْمُنتَظِرِينَ﴾،

(٢٦) وروى احمد بن عمر باسناده عن على ع م أنه قال لبعض شيعته وقد ذكر تغلّب اهل الباطل، يا معشر شيعتنا صلّوا معهم الجمعات وادوا اليهم الامانات، فاذا جاء التمييز قامت الحرب على ساقٍ، فمعنا اهل البيت باب من ابواب الجنّة، من اتّبعه كان محسنًا ومن تخلّف عنه كان محقًا، ومن لحق به لحق بالحقّ، ألا أنّ الدين بنا فُتِح وبنا يُختم، ولو لم يبق من الدنيا إلّا يوم واحد لولاه الله تعالى رجلًا منّا يملأ ها عدلًا كما ملئت جورًا،

(٢٧) وروى عبد الله بن جبلة باسناده عن على ع م أنّه قال ليخرجنّ الاسلام نادًّا من أيدى الناس كأنّه البعير الشارد من الإبل لا يرده الله الّا برجل منّا،

وقوله فمعنا أهل البيت باب من ابواب الجنّة يعنى امام الزمان فى كل عصر فهو باب الجنّة، مَن قصده ودخل فى جملته وعمل بامره صار الى الجنة، ومَن تخلّف عنه محق، وقد ذكرنا فيما تقدّم معنى قوله يملأ ها عدلًا كما ملئت جورًا، وإنّ اصل ذلك وأول ما فعله المهدى، ويتمّ الله ذلك من

من فتنة المنافقين الضالين وغلبة المشركين حتى يكون له الدين كما أخبر في كتابه المبين،

(٢٥) من رواية ابن سلام باسناده عن امير المؤمنين علي ع م أنّه قال الفتن ثلث فتنة السرآء وفتنة الضرآء وفتنة يُمحّص الناس فيها تمحيص ذهب المعدن ولا يزالون كذلك حتّى يخرج رجل منّا عترة النبي صلع فيُصلح الله امرهم،

قوله فتنة السرآء ما قد فتن به من مضى من هذه الأُمّة بما اعطوه من الدنيا بغير حلّه واستمالهم به اعداء الله المتغلّبين على أمر أولياء الله، وفتنة الضرآء ما فتن به العباد وابتلوا به من جَوْر ائمّة الجَوْر عليهم وتغلّبهم وانتهاكهم اياهم، وامّا قوله فتنة يمحّص النّاس فيها تمحيص ذهب المعدن فالمحص في لغة العرب خلاص الشئ تقول محصته محصًا أي أخلصته من كلّ عيب، قال الله تعالى وَلِيُمَحِّصَ اللّٰهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَيَمْحَقَ الْكَافِرِينَ فيما امتحن الناس به من افتتان اعداء الله بائمة الجَوْر واتباعهم III,136 الناس ببذل الدنيا لمن اسعدهم وتتابع المكروه على من تمسّك بدينه صابرًا على مكروههم محّص الله تعالى المؤمنين وأخلصهم وأبانهم ممّن مال الى اعدائه للرغبة والرهبة، فلم يزالوا على ذلك حتّى قام مهديهم فاستنقذ من بلغت اليه دعوته ومدّته وأيامه ونالته يده من المؤمنين واستنقذ بعده

IX,33 كُلِّهِ، كذلك اسمه محمد ابن عبد الله وهذا لايكون كما ذكرنا دفعةً واحدةً بل تعالى الله بالائمة من ولد المهدى عم أمره ودينه والايمان والمؤمنين شيئًا شيئًا، ويفتح على يدى كل واحدٍ منهم ما يفتحه حتى يكون الذى يدين له جميع أهل الارض يفتح ما بقى منها ويقتل باقى من فيها من اعداء الله، ويكون الدين كله لله كما اخبر تعالى بذلك فى كتابه ووعده عباده الصالحين ائمة دينه يوم القيٰمة، ويكون النقلة من الدنيا الى الآخرة،

(٢٤) ومن رواية ابن غسّان بإسناده عن عبد الله ابن عبّاس أنّ رجلًا سأله عن السماء ممّا هى وعن البرق ممّا هو وعن اوّل شئ عاذ بالبيت وعن المهدى مِمَّن هو، قال له ابن عبّاس لقد سَأَلْتَ عن عظيم وهو فى علم الله يسيرٌ، امّا السماء فهى ماء مكفوف، واما البرق فهو من الماء، وأمّا أوّل شئ عاذ بالبيت فإنّ الحيتان الكبار كنّ يأكلن الصغار منهم فى زمن الطوفان فاستعذن بالبيت فاعاذهنّ الله، فامّا المهدى فانّه من أهل البيت أكرمكم الله بأوّلهم وسَيَقدمكم بآخرهم،

قوله أكرمكم بأوّلهم يعنى بمحمد صلع اكرم الله المؤمنين بِأَنّ أوجب لهم بطاعته الجنّة فى الآخرة وهى اعظم ما يكرم الله به المطيعين من عباده، وإكرامه وانعامه اكثر مِن أن يحصيه عباد كما قال تعالى، XIV,37 وَإِنْ تَعُدُّوا نِعْمَةَ ٱللّٰهِ لَا تُحْصُوهَا، وبالائمة من ذرّيته يستنقذ آخرهم

ومن ولد علی ع م وهو ابن عمه دنيا ووصيّه ومن تقدم ذكر فضله واثبات امامته وامامة الائمة من ذريته ، وما ذكر رسول الله فی هذا الخبر من أنّه يملأ الارض قسطًا وعدلًا كما ملئت ظلمًا وجورًا فقد ذكرنا فيما تقدم ما كان ويكون من ذلك وبيّنّا الوجه فيه ، فاغنیٰ ذلك عن اعادته ،

(٢٢) وروی الشعبی عن تميم الداری أنّه قال ما دخلت مدينةً من مدائن الشام أحبّ الیّ من مدينة أنطاكيّة قال رسول الله بها كُسَرُ ألواح موسی ومائدة سليمان ومِنبره وعَصَی موسی فی غارٍ من غاراتها فما من غمامة شرقية ولا غربية ولا جنوبية ولا قبلية إلّا إذا جاءت ذلك الغار ارخت عليه من بركاتها لما فيه ، أمّا إنّه لا يذهب لأيام والليالی حتّی يتولاها رَجُلٌ من ولدی من عترتی يواطئ اسمه اسمی واسم ابيه اسم ابی اشبه الناس بخلقی خلقًا وبخلقی خلقًا ،

(٢٣) وروی محمد بن سلام باسناده عن ابی جعفر محمد ابن علی ع م أنّه قال اذا قام القائم منّا سار الی أنطاكية فيستخرج منها التوراة من غار هیَ فيه مع عَصَی والحجر ،

وقوله يواطئ اسمه اسمی واسم ابيه اسم ابی فلذلك جاء فی غير موضع أنّ القائم بالامامة من آل محمد صلع من ولد المهدی ع م الذی يجمع الله تعالی له الأُمَم ويكون له الدين واحدًا ويُظْهِرُ اللهُ تعالی دينَهُ عَلَی الدِّينِ

كذلك رآه الله تعالى اهلاً لما صار اليه ورآه كذلك بتوفيقه مَن كان أمر الامامة اليه فى وقته قبل مصيرها اليه، فسلم امرها اليه فى ليلة واحدة اراه الله ذلك فيها وقد كان قبل ذلك أُهِّلَ غيره لها فما أُهِّلَ لذلك احدٌ إلاّ مات لمّا اراد الله تعالى من مصيرها الى مستحقّها، ولذلك قيل أنّ الامام الذى سلمها اليه يمثلُ فى وقت تسليمها اليه، فقال عند ذلك، الله اعطاك التى لا فوقها، وكم اراد واصرفها وعوقها عنك ويابى الله إلّا سوقها اليك حتى طوقوك طوقها،

(٢٠) وعن عبد الله ابن مسعود أنّه قال سمعت رسول الله صلع يقول لا تنقضى الدنيا حتّى يليها رجل من عترتى ويحكم بما أنزل الله،

(٢١) ومن رواية عبد الرزاق يرفعه إلى ابى سعيد الخدرى أنّه قال ذكر رسول الله صلع بلاءً يصيب هذه الأُمّة حتّى لا يجد الرجل ملجأً يلجأ اليه من الظلم، ثم قال ثم يبعث الله رجلاً من اهل بيتى فيملأ الأرض قسطًا وعدلًا كما مُلِئَتْ جورًا وظُلمًا يرضى عنه ساكن السماء وساكن الأرض لا يُبقى السماء من قطرها الّا صبّه مدرارًا ولا الارض من نباتها شيئًا إلّا اَخْرَجَتْه حتّى يتمنّا الاحياء والاموات،

قوله عترتى اهل بيتى، العترة فى لغة العرب القرابة من ولد الولد وبنى العم دنيًا، فالمهدى وولده ع م قرابة رسول الله صلع من ولد فاطمة ع م

كما ألف بنا بين قلوبهم بعد عداوة الشرك،

فهذا ممّا قدمنا ذكره وممّا تواترت الأخبار به من أنّ المهدى من ذرّية محمد النبى صلع ومن ولد على بن ابى طالب صلع، وقول رسول الله بنا يختم الدين كما افتتح بنا، فافتتاح الدين كان برسول الله، وبما اقام وصيّه عليًّا من القيام بما أسند اليه منه، وكذلك يختم بالمهدى ع م وبالائمة من ولده حتّى يكون انقطاع الدُنيا وقيام القيٰمة فى عَصْرِ إمامٍ منهم يجمع الله الأمَمَ كُلّها على دين محمد صلع الذى ابتعثه كما اخبر تعالى فى كتابه أنّه يُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى ٱلدِّينِ كُلِّهِ، ويكون الدين كلّه لله، وأنّه يورث الأرض IX,33 عبادَهُ الصالحين وَهُم أولياءه ائمّة دينه من ذرّيّة محمد صلع وولد على وليّه كما أخبر رسول الله صلع أنّ الله تعالى يؤلف بهم بين قلوب عباده بعد عداوة الفتنة كما ألف بين قلوبهم بعد عداوة الشرك، وذلك قول الله تعالى يَا أَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ ٱللهِ عَلَيْكُم إِذْ كُنْتُم أَعْدَآءً فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُم فَأَصْبَحْتُم بِنِعْمَتِهِ إِخْوَانًا، III,98

(١٩) وعن على ع م أنّ رسول الله صلع قال المهدى مِنّا أهل البَيت يُصْلِحُهُ الله فى ليلةٍ واحدةٍ،

قوله يُصْلِحُهُ الله فى ليلة واحدة ليس ذلك أنّه كان فاسدًا فيصلح ولكنّه من قول القائل فلان يُصْلِحُ لِأَمرِ كذا اذا كان اهلًا لذلك الأمر،

فتح مكّة عليه وظهوره على أهلها وانقطاع دينهم الذى كانوا به يدينون وعبادتهم وما كانوا يعبدون، وكذلك وعد الله تعالى عباده الصالحين وهم أولياء الائمة الطاهرين أن يورثهم الأرض ويُظهِرُ دِينَهُ بهم عَلَى IX,33 ٱلدِّينِ كُلِّهِ وَلَوْكَرِهَ ٱلْمُشْرِكُونَ، فهذا هو الفتح المبين، والله ينجز وعده ولا يخلف الميعاد،

(١٧) وممّا رواه عِنان بن ابراهيم عن ابى عبد الله جعفر بن محمّد عم أنّه قال لَوْكان لى من الامر شيئ لَهَدَمْتُ كلّ بناء يحول بين الصّفا والمَرْوَة ولا يكون ذلك إلّا على يدى رجل مِن بنى هاشم،

فما بين الصفا والمَرْوَة ولا يكون ذلك إلّا مسعى الحجيج، وأوّل مَن سعى فيه آدم عم، فلمّا صار ببطن الوادى تراآى له ابليس اللعين الذى أُخرج من الجَنَّة وقد انحدر من الصفا يريد المَرْوَة فلمّا رآه سعى عم فصار السعى هناك سُنَّةً واحدث الناس بعد رسول الله هناك ابنية حالت بين الصفا والمروة، فأخبر الصادق صلع ما احدثوه وابتدعوه فأنّ هدمه من الواجب، وأخبر أنّ ذلك لا يكون إلّا على يدى رجل من بنى هاشم، فلم يكن ذلك الى اليوم وسيكون لِمَن يظهره الله من ائمّة الحقّ وَشيكًا إن شاء الله،

(١٨) وعن على عم أنّه قال لرسول الله صلع أمِنّا المهدى أم غَيْرِنا، قال بل مِنّا، بِنا يُختم الدين كما افتتح بِنا وبِنا يؤلف الله بين قلوبهم بعد عداوة

[كُلُّهُ لله] وَيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى ٱلدِّينِ كُلِّهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ ٱلْمُشْرِكُون،

(١٦) وروى عن ابى صادق أنه سمع رَجُلاً يقول فتح المهلّب طَبَرِسْتان فقال ابو صادق حكاه عن حُذَيْفَة فيما أثره عن رسول الله صلع أن الذى افتتح طَبَرِسْتان والدَيْلم ومدينة بُلَنْجَر والقسطنطينيّة رجل من بنى هاشم،

فما فتحه المسلمون من هذه البلدان وغيرها من سلطان من كانت فى يديه من المشركين وغيرهم قائم وامرهم ثابت يحاربون من افتتحها ويغلب هولاء مرّةً وهولاء مرّةً عليها وينالون كلّ فريق منهم من الفريق الآخر، فليس ذلك مما يُعد فتحًا، وإنّما الفتح ما كان مع هلاك العدوّ والظهور عليه وحسم أثره وانقطاع مدّته وخبره وزوال سلطانه، وذلك ما يكون على يدى أولياء الله الذين وعدهم الله فى كتابه أنهم يرثون الارض وأنه يظهر بهم دينه على الدين كلّه، والله تعالى هو ينجزهم وعده ولا يخلف الميعاد، 9:33

فما جاء أنهم يفتحونه وقد فتحه غيرهم من قبل ظهور امرهم وتمام الوعد لهم فليس ذلك الفتح ممّا يعد فتحًا حتّى يكون الفتح لهم بهلاك اعداء الله اجمعين على أيديهم وايراثهم جميع الأرض وظهور دين الله تعالى على الدين كلّه كما وعد فى كتابه، وهلاك اعدائه وانقطاع امرهم وانحسام ذكرهم وما كانوا به يدينون والهتهم وما كان يعبدون، فذلك هو الفتح المبين. 9:33

كما قال الله تعالى لنبيه محمد صلع إِنَّا فَتَحْنَا لَكَ فَتْحًا مُبِينًا، وكان ذلك 48:1

الشقّ الذى فى طرفه الذى يجعل فى الوتر فى حين الرمى به وللسهم اذا رمى
به فانّما يقع على نصله وليس يعود الى فوقه ، فاراد انهم لا يرجعون الى الاسلام
بعد خروجهم منه ، وقوله يصيرون أربع أُمَم أُمة قائمة على الحقّ فانّهم
يقاتلون ويزلزلون زلزالاً شديدًا فهم على ع م وأصحابه ومن تولاهم وكذلك
قوتلوا معه ع م ومن بعده وزلزلوا زلزالاً شديدًا ، والأُمة الذى ذكر أنهم
على الباطل ليسواهم من الحقّ على شيئ وانهم يصلون وتكون صلوتهم عليهم شهيدًا
فهم اهل التغلّب والتوثّب من ائمة الضلال من بنى اميّة وبنى العبّاس ومن
والاهم واتبعهم ، والأُمة الذى ذكر أنهم يريدون الحقّ فيخطئونه وانهم
يمرقون من الدين مروق السهم من الرمية فهم الخوارج ، وبذلك وصفهم
رسول الله ، والأُمة الذين يقولون هؤلاء أهدى بل هؤلاء أهدى هم عوّام
المنسوبين الى العلم من العامة الذين ترأسوا على الائمة بما انتحلوه من العلم
بارائهم واهويتهم واختلفوا فى تفضيل الرؤساء والاتباع فى الحلال والحرام
والقضايا والاحكام فقوم يقولون هؤلاء اهدى ولبثوا كما قال على ذلك ما
شاء الله حتّى قام مهدى الأُمّة فعاد الاسلام الى الباب الذى خرج منه كما
قال بما اقامه فيه فى مدّة أيامه وحيث انتهت طاعته واقامه ويقيمه
كذلك الائمة من ذرّيته على ما قدمنا ذكره بدعوته وسيرته حتى يجمع الله
تعالى على طاعتهم ويورثهم الارض كما وعدهم ويكون الدين كما قال تعالى

(١٥) وروى عن عبد الله بن مسعود ممّا أثره عن رسول الله صلعم أنّه قال إنّكم معشر هذه الأُمّة تصيرون أربع امم، امة قائمة على الحقّ لاينقص الباطل منها شيئًا، قيل ولايقاتلون، فقال بلى ولايزلزلون زلزالًا شديدًا، وأُمة على الباطل ليسوا من الحقّ على شئ، قيل وهم يصلون، قال نعم، وتكون صلوتهم عليهم شاهدًا، وأُمة يذهبون يريدون الحقّ فيخطئونه يمرقون من الدين كما يمرق السهم من الرمية ولايعودون فيه حتّى يعود السهم على فُوْقِه، وأمة برأيهم يقولون هولاء اهدى بل هولاء اهدى فيلبثون فى ذلك ما شاء الله أن يلبثوا، ثم يوشك الاسلام أن يعود الى الباب الذى خرج منه، قيل الى أين يا عبد الرحمن، قال الى بنى عبد المطلب،

قوله يمرقون المروق الخروج من الشئ من غير مدخله، والمروق من الدين، الخروج عنه بالنفاق، وذلك خلاف الدخول فيه بالايمان، ومروق السهم خروجه منها من غير موضع الذى دخل منه وهوان يرمى الرأمى الصيدَ أو ما رَمى بسهمه فينفذه ويخرج السهم كلّه منه من الموضع الذى انفذ منه لشدّة الضربة ولا يعلق بالسهم شئ من الدم لسرعة خروجه لشدّتها، وقد وصف رسول الله صلعم الخوارج بهذه الصفة فقال يمرقون من الدين كما يمرق السهم من الرمية، والرمية هى المرمية فعيلة فى مكان مفعولة، وقوله ثم لايعودون فيه حتّى يعود السهم على فوقه، والفوق من السهم

عن واحد منهما بل عرفاه وما كانا قبل ذلك رأياه ، والعرب تقول في مثل هذا
في بعض أمثالها هيهات لا يخفى القمر ،

(١٢) وروى عبد الله بن عمرو ذلك ممّا أثره أو نقله عن رسول
الله قال يعطى المهدى قوّة عشرة ،

وكذلك كان المهدى ع م قويًّا يدًا معروفًا بذلك من حداثة سنّه ،

(١٣) ومن حديث قتاده يرفعه الى النبى صلع انه قال المهدى اجلى
الجبهة أقنى الأنف يملأ الارض قسطًا وعدلًا كما مُلِئَتْ جورًا وظلمًا ،

وكذلك كانت صفة المهدى ع م أقنى أجلى ، وهتان الصفتانِ
من احسن صفات الجباه والأنوف ، ومَلَأَ عَدْلُه ما وصل اليه سلطانه من
الارض ويملأ باقيها من يأتى بعده ، وقيل لبعض الائمة الماضين انت المهدى
قال كيف أكون المهدى وقد بلغتُ من السنّ ما ترون ، واخذ ساعده فمدّ جلده
وقال المهدى لا يوخذ له بالركاب ،

(١٤) وعن ابى جعفر محمد بن على ع م أنّه قال يقوم المهدى ع م وليس
في رأسه ولا لحيته طاقة بيضاء ،

وكذلك كان المهدى ع م لما قام بالامامة ، وسلّمها اليه امام الزمان
الذى كان فى عصره ، ونص عليه بانه مهدى الائمة ، ودعت بذلك اليه
دعاته ، وهو يومئذٍ حدث السنّ مقتبل الشباب من الفتيان واحسن الشبان ،

كأنّما هو نور يلوح منه لمن نظر اليه، قوله اللون لون عربي وكذلك كان لَونُه كَلَون رسول الله سيّد العرب أبلج الوجه يشوبه حمرة، وهو الذى يقول له اهل المعرفة بالحلى من العرب الرفق والسمرة ولا يقولون أبيض فى الوان الناس؛ وهذا اللون افضل الوان الناس عند العرب وهو أكثر الوان أشرافهم، وقوله الجسم جسم اسرائيلى، واجسام بنى اسرائيل اجسام جسيمة، وهم فى الأكثر والاغلب أجسم من العرب، وكذلك كان المهدى ع م وَسيمًا جسيمًا بساطًا لايكاد احد يماشيه الاقصر عنه وصغر الى جانبه، وكذلك كان من صارت اليه الامامة من بعده الى اليوم، قد أتاهم الله تعالى بالفضل والجمال والكمال، ولقد حاول المهدى بالله ع م فى حين استتاره ان يخفى نفسه ويخملها فما قدر على ذلك وكان حيثما مرّ ورآه من يحصّل أمره يقول والله ما هذا إلّا ملك من الملوك وما هذا سُوقَة ولا تاجِر كما يقول؛ وكذلك حاول المنصور ع م مرارًا أن يخفى نفسه لبعض من اراد ان يسمع كلامه فتزيّا بغير زيّه ولبس خلاف لباسه ودخل بين جماعة تقدّم اليهم فى اطراح اجلاله وتبجيله وأن يحلّوه محلّ احدهم، ففعلوا فما خفى على من رآه، وفعل ذلك فى بعض أسفاره، ودخل الى بعض حصون المرابطين فى بعض الاطراف وبها مَن لم يره قطُّ فما خفى عنهم، وفعل مثل ذلك لمّا ظفر باللعين مخلد وصار فى أسره، وبمعتدّ بن محمد بن خزر لمّا صار فى الأسر اليه ايضًا فما خفى

رأيتَ ما لقينا في غزوتنا ولكنا نرجو أن نفتحها من قابل إن شاء الله تعالى، فقال حُذيفة الذى يفتح الدَيلم وبَلَنْجَر والقسطنطينيّة رجل من بنى هاشم بهم فتح الله الأمر وبهم يختم فما أنّه فتح ويفتح من هذه المواضع وغيرها فلا بُدّ ان يفتحه الفتح الكامل الذى لا يكون بعده دين غير دين الاسلام،

قائم ذلك الزمان من آل محمد صلع الذى يجمع الله له امر العباد ويُظهر دينه على الدين كلّه كما وعد سبحنه ذلك فى الكتاب،

(١٠) ومن حديث وكيع بن الجرّاح يرفعه الى النبى صلع انّه قال لَيفتحنّ القسطنطينيّة ولَنعم الامير اميرهم ولنعم الجيش ذلك الجيش، والقسطنطينيّة بعد لم تُفتح،

والذى يفتحها كما جاءَ فى الخبر قبل هذا قائم من الائمة من آل محمد صلعم،

(١١) ومن حديث سُفيان الثورى يرفعه الى رسول الله صلعم أنّه قال المهدى رجل من ولدى أرى وجهه كالكوكب الدرّى اللون لون عربى والجسم جسم اسرائيلى،

فكذلك كان المهدى صلع وَسيمًا من اجمل الرجال وَجْهًا كأنّ وجهه كوكب درّيّ كما قال رسول الله فى صِفته، والكوكب الدرّي هو المضىٔ من الكواكب وجمعها دراری، وكذلك كان وجه المهدى صلع مُشرقًا مضيئًا

اذادان العالم وقوى امره وكان الدين واحدًا كما وعد الله تعالىٰ ،

(٧) وممّا رواه زادان عن سلمان الفارسي رح ومن ذلك ممّا أثره عن رسول الله صلع أنّه قال لابُدّ من قائم من ولد فاطمة يقوم من المغرب يقتل الزنادقة ويملك الترك والخزر والدَيْلم والحَبَش ويؤتى بملوك الروم مصفّدين فى الحديد ولا يقوم رأيةً إلّا رأية الايمان ، وهذا من معنى ما تقدم ذكره وشرحناه ،

(٨) ومن رواية الشعبى عن حذيفة ابن اليمان مما أثره عن رسول الله صلع أنّه قال لا يفتح بُلَنْجَرَ ولاجبل الدَيْلم ولا القسطنطينيّة إلّا رجل من بنى هاشم، يعنى إمام ذلك الزمان من ولد المهدى، ولم يكن ولا يكون امام من بني هاشم الاعلى ع م والائمّة من ذريّته نسلُ رسول الله صلعم وذرّيّته من فاطمة الزهراء سيّدة نساءِ العالم، كما جاء ذلك فيما تقدّم ذكره من هذا الكتاب ولا يفتح هذا المواضع إلّا هم ع م ،

(٩) ومن ذلك ايضًا ما رواه الشعبى أنّه قال اخبرنى مالك بن صحار الهمدانى قال غَزَوْنا بُلَنْجَرَ فى خلافة عثمان فنكبنا وجُرِح اخى فحملته بين يدىّ جريحًا ، وقد انصرفنا فإنّى لأسير يومًا اذ ادركنى رجل من خلفى فضرب ظهرى بسوط فى يده ، فالتفتُ فاذا هو حُذَيْفَة اليمانى (ابن اليمان) فسلّمت عليه فقال من هذا بين يديك ، فقلت اخى مجروحًا ولقد

(٥) وقد جاء هذا أيضًا عن ابي عبد الله جعفر بن محمد ع م فيما رواه حمزة بن حمران عنه أنّه قال عَدَدتُ عليه الائمة بعد رسول الله صلع واحدًا بعد واحدٍ حتّى بلغتُ اليه ، وشهدتُ أنّ الله تعالى فرض طاعتهم، فلمّا سمّيته أومى بيده الى أن اسكتْ فسكتُّ ، فقال ما كانت الائمة على حال مُذ قبض الله نبيّه إلّا ومن سمّيت اولى الناس بالناس، ثم قال اذا حدّثتكم في رجل منّا بشئ بأنّه يكون فيه فلم يكن فيه فهو كائن في ولده من بعده ،

فهذا بيان ما ذكرته ومصداقه ويؤيّد ذلك ويشده ويؤكّده قول الله تعالى في محمد صلع هُوَ ٱلَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِٱلْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ ٱلْحَقِّ لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى ٱلدِّينِ كُلِّهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ ٱلْمُشْرِكُونَ ، هذا وعد من الله لرسوله صلع أنجز له بعضه في حياته ثم أظهره عليه من الأديان وأنجز ذلك وينجز باقيه على أيدي الائمة من ذرّيّته ،

(٦) ومن مثل ذلك ما رواه الحسن بن محبوب باسناده عن ابي عبد الله جعفر ابن محمد ع م أنّه قال اذا قام القائم منّا عرض الايمان على كلّ ناصب، وإنْ دخل فيه بحقيقة وإلّا ضرب عنقه او يؤديه الجزية كما يؤديها اهل الذمّة اليوم، ويشتدّ على وسطه الهميان ويطردهم من الامصار الى السواد ،

وهذا ممّا لم يكن بعد ممّن مضى من الائمة وهو كائن لمن يقوم منهم

ويكون الدين لله كما وعد تعالى في كتابه ويظهر على كلّ دين كما وجب في ايجابه
ويكون ذلك على أيدى ائمّة دينه وأوليائه ، وينسب الى المهدي أوّلهم
اذا كان سبب ابتدائه وعنه تفرّع ما يتفرّع فيه الى غاية انتهائه، كما ينسب
ذلك وما قبله الى محمد النبي صلع اذ هو في شريعته وملّته ولأهل دعوته
وأُمّته وعلى يد الائمّة من ذرّيته ،

(۴) وما جاء ممّا يؤكّد ذلك ممّا هو في معناه ما روى عن سلمان
الفارسي رح ممّا أثره عن رسول الله صلع أنّه ذكر المهدي ع م وقال إنّه
لَقاتلُ الظالمين ويقتل الزنادقة ولا يقبل منهم توبة ولا يأخذ منهم
جِزْيَة ولا يدعُ فى الارض احد على غير دين الاسلام إلّا قتله ، ويهلك الترك
والخَزَر والدَيلم والحَبَش ويؤتى بملوك الروم مصفّدين فى الحديد ولا يدعُ
يهوديًا ولا نصرانيًا ولا يوجب لهم ذمّة ، ويردّ النّاس جميعًا على ملّة ابراهيم
ومحمّد ع م ،

فهذا ممّا ذكرنا أنّه يجرى شيئًا بعد شئ على يد المهدي والائمّة من
ولده ع م ، وينسب اليه اذ هو اوّل من فتحه وقام به والى رسول الله اذ هو صاحب
الشريعة والملّه وولىّ الائمة والامامة وصاحب الرسالةُ والدعوة كما
قيل أنّه يكون لبعض الائمة فلم يكن فيه حتّى قبض وهو يكون فى وليّه
من بعده وينسب اليه ،

رسول الله عند مقتل الحسين صلع ومن معه، وطحنت الفتنة طحن الرحى ببقالها وحتّى لم يبقَ من المؤمنين إلّا تافع لأعداء الله لما ينالون منهم او غير ضارّ لهم، فعند ذلك قام ابن خير هذه الأمّة وهو المهدي بن علي الوصي وابن خير البريّة لأنّه ابن رسول الله، فقتل من اعداء الله ايام مدّته من وصلت اليه يَدُه، ويقتل كذلك من ولده منهم من بقي حتّى يجعل الله في قلبه الرحمةَ فيرفع السيف عنهم كما قال علي ع م ولم يقُل عليه السّلام من ذلك إلّا ما أخبره به رسول الله واطّلعه على ما يكون من مثل ذلك وغيره، وذلك من شواهده وبراهينه ع م،

(٣) وعن جعفر ابن محمد ع م أنّه قال لو قام قائمنا ما أقام النّاس على الطلاق إلّا بالسيف ولو قد كان ذلك لم يكُن إلّا بسيرة علي ابن ابي طالب ع م،

وكذلك كان الأمر لمّا قام المهدي ع م اقام الناس على طلاق العِدّة والسُنّة على ما نصّه الله في كتابه وسُنّة رسوله صلع وقطع طِلاقَ البدعة وكلّ ما ابتدعه المبتدعون في الدّين والاحكام والقول في الحلال والحرام، وأقام الناس بالسيف على سيرة علي ع م التي سار بها في الأُمّة على ما عهد اليه رسول الله وممّا أثره على ذلك الأئمّة من ولده فاحيوا ما اماته المبطلون من أحكام الدين، وقطعوا بدع المبتدعين، ولا يزال ذلك حتّى يعود الدّين جديدًا غضًّا كما ابتدأ في الاسلام صفوًا محضًا كما نشاء

صلى الله عليه وسلّم بالدعاء اوّلاً،

(٢) وعن امير المؤمنين ع م أنّه خطب الناس في الكوفة وندَاهم الى الجهاد وحذرهم الفَشَلَ وما يخشى من سوء عواقبه، فلمّا فرغ من خطبته قام اليه رجل فقال يا امير المؤمنين من ذا يَرومنا وأنت فينا اخو رسول الله صلعم وابن عمّه وصهره، ومعنا لواء رسول الله ورأيتُه. ومعنا ابنا رسول الله الحسن والحسين سيّدا شباب اهل الجنّة، فَلَو اجتمعت الجنّ والانس علينا ما اطاقونا، فقال له علي ع م وكيف يكون ذلك ولم يشتدّ البلاء فيظهر الحمية وتستبى الذرية ويطحنكم طحن الرحى بثفالها حتّى لا يَبْقى إلّا نافع لهم أوغير ضارٍّ لهم، فاذا كان ذلك ابتعث الله خيرهذه الامّة (او قال البرية) فيقتلهم هرجًا هرجًا حتّى يرضى الله وحتّى يقول قريش والعرب والله لَوْكان هذا من آل محمد لَرحمنا، ويتمنون أنّهم رآؤني ساعةً من نهار لِأشفع لهم الله، فقام اليه رجل فقال يا امير المؤمنين ومتى يبلغ رضى الله، قال يقذف الله في قلبه الرحمة فَيَرفع السيف عنهم فقال له متى يكون ذلك. قال إن شاء الله، قوله طحن الرحى بثفالها، الثفال خرقة اوجلدة تلقى تحتَ الرحى اذا كانت تطحن، قوله هرجًا هرجًا القتال، والاختلاط فيه، وكذلك لم يقُم المهدى حتّى اشتدّ ابتلاء وظهرت الحمية من بني العباس ومن بني أُميّة وسُبِيَتِ الذرية ذرّيّة

المنتخب من بعض كتب الاسماعيلية

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

(١) من الجزء الخامس عشر من كتاب شرح الاخبار

(١) وعن ابي بصير قال سمعتُ اباعبدالله جعفر ابن محمد يقول إنَّ الاسلام بدأ غريبًا وسيعود غريبًا كما بدأ فطوبي للغرباءِ ،

وهذا حديث معروف يُروى عن رسول الله صلع رواه كثير من الخاص والعامّ ، وإنّما حكاهُ جعفر ابن محمد الصادق ع م وعنه وتركتُ اسنادهُ اليه ، قال ابو بصير فقلتُ له اشرح لي هذا جعلتُ فداك يا ابن رسول الله قال يَستأنِف الداعي مِنّا دعاءً اجديدًا كما دعا رسول الله ، وكذلك المهدي ع م استأنف دعاءً اجديدًا الى الله لمّا غُيِّرَتِ السُنَن وكثرتِ البِدَع وتغلّب أئمّة الضُلالِ واندرس ذِكر ائمّة الهُدى الذين افترض الله طاعتهم على العباد واقامهم للدُعاء اليه والدلالة بآياته عليه ، ونُسِي ذكرهم وانقطع خبرُهم لِغلبةِ ائمة الجور عليهم . فلمّا انجز الله بالدعاءِ للائمة ما وعدهم به من ظهور مهديهم احتاج ان يدعوهم دعاءً اجديدًا كما ابتدأهم رسول الله